Ao 3m. 35. 33. 96. 38

REMARKS

ON THE

NEW SUGAR-BILL,

AND ON THE

NATIONAL COMPACTS

RESPECTING THE

SUGAR-TRADE

AND

SLAVE-TRADE.

"Thus has the Courſe of Juſtice wheel'd about."

SHAKSPEARE.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD,

AND J. DEBRETT, PICCADILLY.

M.DCC.XCII.

338.1
R281
538511

OF THE

SUGAR-BILL.

Of the Purport of the Sugar-Bill, as paſſed by the Houſe of Commons, in May, 1792.

THE leading features of the bill to be diſcuſſed are theſe. — Whenever the average of the prices of raw (and clayed) ſugar, ſold in the port of London, to be taken weekly upon oath, and made public in the Gazette, exceeds, in the ſix weeks which reſpectively precede either the middle of February, June, or October, the amount of 65*s.* for the hundred weight, (the duty of 15*s.* thereon included,) the draw-back on *raw* ſugar exported to foreign parts is immediately to ceaſe during four months, and the bounty on *refined* ſugar to ceaſe during a like term, but commencing after an interval of one month.

An exception is made as to the ſtandard for the two periods occurring in the preſent year, on account of

temporary circumſtances; the ſtandard for the firſt, which takes place in July inſtead of June, being fixed at 75 *s.* and that for the ſecond at 70 *s.*

The grant of licences, allowed by law to Britiſh ſhips to carry ſugars from the colonies to foreign parts,* is to be governed by the above ſtate of average-prices.

During the period that the ſuſpenſion of the drawback or bounty takes place, particular regulations are made as to the export of ſugars to Ireland, &c.

The payment of the duties on *foreign* ſugar and coffee, while kept in certain warehouſes, is permitted to be in arrears during one year (for the accommodation of the importer).

Naſſau, with ſuch other ports of the Bahama iſlands, or of Bermuda, as ſhall be named for that purpoſe by the king in council, are made free ports for receiving foreign ſugar and coffee, under the uſual free-port regulations.

* Theſe licences are granted on condition of the ſugars being firſt brought to ſome port in Great Britain, to which place the ſhip is bound to return again within eight months after ſo touching. Sugars may be carried *directly* from the colonies to the ſouthward of Cape Finiſterre.

Remarks on the Sugar-Bill.

In conſidering this bill, it is a neceſſary act of juſtice to the Weſt-India planters and merchants to premiſe, that they have ſeen the late high prices of ſugars with regret, though, for reaſons which will be mentioned, it was out of their power to redreſs them. They did not, indeed, at firſt acknowledge the propriety of paſſing any *law* upon the ſubject, but they ſoon acquieſced in that propoſed by adminiſtration. They have no other merit than good ſenſe in this proceeding. They ſaw the riſing danger, and prudently capitulated rather than wait the ſtorm in its full extent; a conduct which, perhaps, deſerves imitation, as well by themſelves as by government, in other concerns now under public diſcuſſion.

The bill in queſtion may be conſidered under the four views of its efficacy, its juſtice, its clauſes, and whether there cannot be a better bill. It is neceſſary to touch upon theſe points before we go upon more intereſting matter.

Firſt, reſpecting *its efficacy*.—As the coloniſts and refiners each expect injury from the bill, it is difficult to ſuppoſe how they are each to loſe in conſequence of

it, and the public not to gain. — The refiners, indeed, ſay, that the bill will ſanction high prices without inſuring low ones. But it is plain that they ſay this from theory only; for, when they ſpeak from *experience*, they allow that the mere whiſper of the bill in queſtion, lowered refined goods 20*s.* per hundred weight, and raw ſugars 10*s.* They ſay, alſo, repeatedly, that "the export-price certainly regulates "the market;" and it requires little difficulty to prove, that a check to exportation will, in general, accumulate a quantity of ſugars in the home-market; and that the reſult of ſuch accumulation will be a reduction of prices.

It admits of doubt, indeed, whether the bill may not have its object defeated from another cauſe; namely, the diminution of the cultivation of ſugar, or of its conſignment to the Britiſh market, in conſequence of the intended reſtrictions. This is a ſufficient reaſon for not fixing the ſtandard too low; particularly as the great diſtance, at which the coloniſt ſtands removed from information, will naturally multiply his fears as to the ſtate of the home-markets, where alone the law operates.

But if, after all, the bill ſhall prove *inefficient*, it is natural to ſuppoſe that it will meet an early repeal.

But, ſecondly, *is the bill juſt?*—Here we loſe ſight of one of the parties intereſted, namely, the coloniſts; from

from whom all complaint is precluded by their aſſent to the bill, unleſs it ſhould produce unforeſeen injuries to them in its operation. — The queſtion, therefore, remains ſingly with the refiners; and, as to the refiners, the queſtion reduces itſelf to this: Will the loſs, which may occur from the bill, fall upon *raw* or upon *refined* ſugars?

We may anſwer as follows.—The coloniſt is bound faſter to his eſtate than the refiner to his trade; his culture cannot change its object without great loſs; and, ſince each year's crop is in cultivation ſixteen or eighteen months before it arrives at market, he is pledged to ſubmit to whatever prices a diſtant futurity ſhall produce for him with reſpect to the ſugars he ſends here; and, as he knows little beſides what appears in his own iſland, his diſadvantages in this reſpect become increaſed. In any event the coloniſt muſt ſuffer long before he abandons lightly; he muſt ſuffer long before the public will commiſerate him, while monopoly and extortion are the ready watch-words to bear him down.—The caſe is every way the reverſe for the refiner. His foreſight is called for reſpecting ſhort periods; he ſees, at one view, the produce of *all* colonies and the demands of *all* nations; he can ſoon retrench or quit his concerns; if he buys high and ſells low at one time, he may reverſe it at another; if hurt, he has the public ſympathy on his ſide, and is ſure of a repeal of the law aggrieving him; and, by keeping his

his article, which he may do for four months with little loſs, the foreign market may again open to him. Even the ſuſpenſion of his operations, if it ſhould become ſerious, being a grievance common to all in his trade, muſt receive compenſation generally, or the profeſſion would be relinquiſhed.

There can be little doubt, therefore, either that the loſs which occurs will fall on the coloniſt, ſince the producer *muſt* ſell and the refiner *need* not buy; or elſe that any injury received by the refiner will be a full motive for altering the law.

Thirdly, we are to ſpeak of the *clauſes of the bill.*

And here we may obſerve, firſt, that a ſpace of time *intervenes* before the law acts upon *refined* ſugars; and, as refined ſugars are all that have hitherto been exported to foreigners, they are all in which the refiner has any concern. This proviſion then enables the refiner to get rid of large quantities of his goods; and as, by the very nature of the law, the goods muſt have been bought cheap and ſold dear, (that is, bought under the average and ſold at or above it,) he can have little to complain of; ſince there is no period of the year at which the refiners cannot, in one month, ſupply more than is uſually required for four months foreign trade; and ſpeculators will always offer to purchaſe this ſupply, ſhould not foreigners do it in the firſt inſtance.

As

As to the clauſe creating high rates for the ſtandards for the two *firſt periods* named in the bill, we have only to obſerve that they are temporary; and were ſuggeſted partly to protect the ſugar refiners themſelves, who ſay that their ſuite of refinery-proceſſes laſt for five or ſix months before they are intirely cloſed (though ſome of their refined goods are produced from them within the firſt ſix weeks). They were alſo partly intended to relieve perſons who have purchaſed ſugars in the colonies at the great prices, induced by the late prices in Europe: ſugars, which are not yet all brought to Europe; and which, if ſold even at the preſent rates, will occaſion a loſs of 25 per cent. Beſides, as the adoption of this ſugar-bill, by the parliament of Ireland, will only happen, by virtue of the arrangement made between the two countries, in four months after its meeting next winter; an earlier reduction of the ſtandard would not only be nugatory, from the impoſſibility of putting a check to exportation to foreign parts through the medium of Ireland; but would contribute to confirm the rivalſhip of the Iriſh refiners.

The rate for the *permanent* ſtandard admits of ſeveral obſervations. — Firſt, the buyer, in order to place himſelf out of the reach of danger, will purchaſe ſugars at prices ſo low, as amply to allow for the interference of it; and, as the ſeller will precipitate his ſale from correſponding prepoſſeſſions, the fear produced by the ſtandard will operate *both* upon buyer and ſeller.

Hence

Hence the ſtandard of the bill will virtually become nominal, and another *effective* ſtandard be created, ſeveral ſhillings below it. — A ſecond obſervation on the permanent ſtandard is, that, though it is formed from averages, it is itſelf a *ne plus ultra*; and, though derived from a medium, it fixes a *maximum*. This point of exceſs is deemed to exiſt whenever the average-price of raw and clayed ſugars of all qualities ſtands at 65*s*. When this occurs, the average of the foreign market muſt be 25 per cent. higher than this exceſs, in order to admit of ſugar being ſent there loaded with the Britiſh duties and accompanied with the various charges of conveyance. — The permanent ſtandard admits of another remark with reference to the coloniſt. Having no bounty at low prices, its operation, as far as it is favourable, is his ſole compenſation when diſtreſſed by low prices. It ſtands as his fartheſt hope, his *ultima Thule*, in a caſe where his imagination was before unlimited. It has already been obſerved, that a deduction is to be made for ſo much of the ſtandard only as is nominal; and that clayed ſugars, being employed to inflame the average, the ſtandard will operate by anticipation. — In the reſult, then, it will be found, that the ſtandard does not allow, in any caſe, a receipt of 40 per cent. ſurplus beyond the planter's *living profit*; a fluctuation much exceeded by that in articles of Britiſh agriculture, and far ſhort of

the

the proportion of depreciation which ſugars have often experienced.

Fourthly, another topic remains reſpecting the bill. *Is this the beſt law that can be?* — It will be proper to anſwer this query fully when we hear better laws propoſed.

The beſt meaſure would be *no law*; and the next beſt would be to have the law as *temporary* as the occaſion for it. But, as the law is deſigned to obviate public uneaſineſs and to reduce prices, which all parties have allowed to have been exceſſive, and as it is hoped that it will ſucceed in both objects, no oppoſition is offered to it by the coloniſts.

But it is proper to notice that this bill is only partially formed upon the model of the *corn-trade ſyſtem*. The corn-trade laws are deſigned to equalize the prices of corn, through a courſe of years, by checking exportation at high prices, and giving a bounty on exportation in caſe of low ones: they are deſigned to reduce prices by encouraging production; and they operate upon a commodity which is ſubject to little or no manufacture. Not ſo this bill; which is primarily deſigned rather to *reduce* prices, than either to equalize them or to multiply production; for, it checks high prices, and gives no bounty in the caſe of low ones; and, as none but refined ſugars uſually go abroad, it renders the refiner at all times a timid purchaſer, even

where he purchaſes at all, leſt he ſhould be ſurpriſed in the midſt of the proceſs, neceſſary to fit his commodity for the foreign market.

As to the propoſal for an immediate ſuſpenſion of the drawback and bounty, it is founded upon natural, but by no means upon politic, notions. Upon many ſubjects there are what may be called *firſt ſuggeſtions*; but, where theſe ſuggeſtions are not adopted in common practice, it is natural to preſume that they are objectionable. The firſt idea for procuring cheap prices is to uſe conſtraint, which often ſucceeds for the exiſting quantities of any article. But the power of the legiſlator goes no farther: he cannot conſtrain the *wills* of men: he may as well, in Mr. Locke's phraſe, hedge in the cuckoo. The coloniſts, therefore, will not continue to furniſh freſh ſupplies of ſugar, if they are not paid, for what they have before brought, to their full ſatisfaction. The inſtances of the ſhort-lived triumph of conſtraint are ſo many, that it is now the triteſt of all maxims in political economy, that plenty is to be produced by liberty and encouragement inſtead of force.

So much for the bill, the merit of all of whoſe clauſes it is by no means requiſite to diſcuſs. The queſtion is about its ſyſtem; avowedly a ſyſtem of experiment; and not volunteered by government, but produced in deference to the public alarm.

If any doubts are left about the prudence of the bill, they reſpect, firſt, what has been ſo often alluded to, the operation it may have upon importation from the colonies; and, next, the poſſibility that the vague fears or hopes of re-exporters may cauſe greater ſhipments to foreign markets than would happen without the bill.

Various miſcellaneous topics remain, and theſe will be ranged under two heads; namely, the objections urged by refiners; and the objections urged in debate in the Houſe of Commons.

Objections of the Refiners.

I. The refiners ſay that the coloniſts can *command* prices.

To the anſwer already given on this ſubject, we may add, that, in great commodities, prices are commanded by the will neither of buyer nor ſeller. The great regulators of markets are *quantity and demand.* Even in the caſe of the Eaſt-India company, which, in many reſpects, acts as one man, competition, though operating only on one ſide, produces the greateſt ef-

ſects; but in the Weſt-India trade, it operates on both ſides. — The ſugar-trade is a monopoly as to the *whole* of it; but it retains competition and jealouſy as to its *parts*. — The ſugar-refiner, who was queſtioned as an evidence upon the ſubject before the Houſe of Commons, confeſſed, that he neither knew nor had ever heard of any combination of Weſt-India merchants, reſpecting ſugar. So vaſt an object as ſugar, amounting to ſeveral millions annually, placed in various hands variouſly circumſtanced, is not ſuſceptible of combination. It admits of ſpeculation, but not of combination; it admits of prudence, but not of concert. The reſource of the merchant is ſimply to *ſell with judgment*; and perhaps the beſt judgment dictates that which exactly favours, or at leaſt does not counteract, that moſt deſirable object, a gradual conſumption of the annual crop; namely, to haſten the early ſales of the ſeaſon, and to protract the late ones, and to be always ſelling ſomething when there is a large ſtock on hand, ſince a large ſtock cannot be diſpoſed of in a moment. If the merchant has any other rule, whether general or occaſional, it requires ſecrecy rather than combination; becauſe it is the intereſt of each merchant to outdo his neighbour. In general, the merchants ſeldom keep their ſugar long, either becauſe of the loſs in keeping, ariſing from the waſte of the commodity in its raw ſtate, together with its various attendant charges; or becauſe ſome of them

them are needy, others of them diſlike trouble, and others act thus from ſyſtem. — The only moment, when the Weſt-India merchants can pretend to have any influence upon the market, is very early or very late in the annual ſeaſon; but as this happens, by the very ſuppoſition, when the market is moſt defective in its ſupply, and as it is generally agreed, among conſiderate political writers, that nothing better effects an even diſtribution of a commodity, (and, as we ſhall ſoon have reaſon to add, gives it a more equal and reaſonable price,) than the gradual ſale of it, this influence is to be deemed a benefit, rather than otherwiſe. If the merchant, on theſe occaſions, ſhould unfortunately ſell precipitately, a middle party occurs, namely, the grocers and refiners, who would take care to put the public under contribution for any natural price, which the merchants had omitted to obtain. — And we may here obſerve, by the by, that the provident refiners have no objection to an advance of the prices of raw ſugars at the *end* of the annual ſeaſon, after they have finiſhed their own purchaſes, and have only to conſider their ſales.

II. Reſpecting the ſuppoſed wilfulneſs of the conduct of the coloniſts, as to the late exceſſive prices of ſugar (without which wilfulneſs that exceſs cannot be imputed to them as cenſurable); the charge is eaſily done away, not only by the remarks made as to the immutability

immutability of great markets, but by the following conſiderations.

In the laſt winter the more diſcreet coloniſts would have reduced the prices of ſugar conſiderably, had it been in their power; as producing merely a temporary benefit, and tending to eſtabliſh the evil of permanent reſtrictions. But, firſt, no man could rule his neighbour, and ſuch a meaſure on the part of individuals only, would have been futile and ridiculous; next, if the coloniſts had ſold low to the refiners and grocers, yet, ſince theſe would have got the utmoſt poſſible price afterwards from the public, they would have loſt their own profit, without obtaining credit with any one for moderation; and, laſtly, they had, in general, ſuffered heavily by paſt calamities, and anticipated future ones of a ſtill heavier nature from the temper of the public. Nor is it to be forgotten, that whatever were the prices paid, a part of them were repaid by foreigners, and the reſt only formed a transfer of property between ſubject and ſubject.

III. But, ſay the refiners, the planters gained £2,657,768 upon the importation of laſt year, compared, quantity for quantity, with the importations between 1770 and 1776. — This ſtatement is capable of very ſatisfactory explanations.

For example, inſtead of the quantity brought for home conſumption, it ſpeaks of the total importation, and conſequently is liable to the remark juſt made,

made, that the price of ſo much of the quantity as is re-exported to foreigners turns to national profit. Again, whatever be the inconvenience from the price ſuffered by the public, it was, as has been ſtated, in a manner *involuntary* on the ſide of the planters. By the preſent bill, alſo, it is propoſed, that this inconvenience, to whatever cauſe it may have been owing, ſhall not, under the ſame circumſtances, ever again return; ſince future prices are permanently limited, by this bill, to an amount far lower than thoſe already obtained. The refiners, likewiſe, have allowed, upon another occaſion, that the quality of raw ſugars has, of late years, been very conſiderably improved; which improvement, being the reſult both of care and expence in the coloniſts, fairly merits compenſation on the part of the purchaſer.

But this is not all. The particular expences attending Weſt-India Eſtates have lately heavily been increaſed, in conſequence of the check given (ſolely for the accommodation of Great Britain) to the intercourſe with North America; a check which has raiſed the price of ſeveral extenſive objects of purchaſe, and lowered that of ſeveral extenſive objects of ſale; and theſe expences have increaſed alſo in conſequence of the increaſed value of negroes, and of the ſuperior expenditure now laudably uſed in providing for them. Caſualties, to an immenſe amount, might likewiſe find their enumeration in this place; but theſe will be touched upon

upon hereafter, eſpecially as they do not all of them make part of the permanent charges attendant upon Weſt-India Eſtates; though it might be expected, that, when conſidered as caſualties, they would at leaſt operate in allaying the ill-judged reſentment in the public, if not in exciting its commiſeration. — But there is another head of expences, the juſtice of which it is impoſſible not to admit, and of the weight of which all men are made ſenſible by their perſonal experience; namely, that general one which is conſequent upon the operation of public taxes. It is a known axiom in politics that taxes ultimately diſtribute themſelves ſo equally upon the public as eventually to raiſe the prices of all commodities; each man repaying himſelf, for taxes which he pays on other articles, by advancing the price of his own; and it would be hard indeed, if, while others *receive* more to pay with, they ſhould refuſe to reimburſe thoſe who are equally ſufferers by this re-action and interchange of the public burthens.

The moſt important obſervation, however, on this head ſtill remains to be noticed at ſome length. — It is this. The price of ſugars at the higheſt period was compared by the refiners with that of the loweſt; and this was ſo low, owing to abundant crops in our own and the neighbouring iſlands, as to bring the planters into debt. — But, to give force to this conſideration, a great commercial axiom is to be mentioned, which

is,

is, that quantity and price are not *correlative* and corresponding in years of high and low prices. For high years, hear Mr. King, as quoted by Dr. Davenant. "*One*-tenth of defect in the harveſt will raiſe the price "of corn about three-tenths above the common rate; "*two*-tenths of defect will raiſe the price eight-tenths; "and *three*-tenths deficiency will advance it about one "and ſix tenths or ſixteen-tenths." Hence we ſee, that, when quantity goes decreaſing in an arithmetical ratio, price goes on rapidly increaſing in more than a geometrical ratio.—In ſhort, when the commodity is ſcarce, the *commodity* is, as it were, *put to auction*; but, when it is plentiful, it is the money which is put to auction; and, at this auction, not only fears and rivalſhips influence, but men meaſure value by the degree of their own deſires compared with what they can afford; whereas, in the uſual courſe of things, prices obtain a proportion determined by the uſual rates of coſts and of profits upon what is ſold.—But theſe diſtorted prices naturally occur in a ſtill greater degree in caſes of *ſcarcity* than of plenty; for, as moſt perſons contract their demands for expenſive articles upon an increaſe of price, ſo moſt eſpecially do the poor for articles conſumed by them, particularly when they are not articles of prime neceſſity; or, in other words, price *falls more* with plenty than it riſes with ſcarcity.—We may add, that, as a ſeries of ſcanty years brings on a *habit* of high prices,

ſo the reverſe happens in a ſeries of plentiful years; and, in like manner, as a crop, bought under a continued *apprehenſion of ſcarcity* naturally acquires exaggerated prices, ſo does a crop, bought under oppoſite perſuations, experience proportionally lower prices. Theſe circumſtances have each reſpectively operated upon the two periods of ſales brought under compariſon by the refiners. — We may therefore conclude this head by obſerving, that, the price in each *period* having ſo much differed from its natural level, a *double* cauſe ariſes to widen their *mutual divergence.**

The remaining replies to the refiners will be more briefly diſcuſſed.—Let us proceed, then,

IV. To detect a conſiderable miſtake in their concluſions, drawn from the ſuppoſed average-prices of ſugar in Jamaica. — Here we may obſerve, that they have wholly overlooked that Jamaica ſugars are ſold, not as in this country by the long hundred weight of 112lbs, but by the ſhort or ſuttle hundred weight of 100lbs, which makes a difference of $\frac{1}{9}$ in their eſtimate. — Next, they forget a waſte in tranſporting the commodity from the Weſt-Indies to Great Britain equal to another $\frac{1}{9}$. The caſk or package alſo coſts eleven ſhillings, which is not included in the coſt of the commodity, which makes eight-pence addition to each hundred weight; and the iſland-commiſſion and other

* It follows, from what is ſaid above, that a large crop may ſell for leſs than a ſmall one; and *vice verſâ*.

charges

charges amount to one ſhilling more. Theſe miſtakes, added together, would make a difference of 6*s.* or 7*s.* in each hundred weight; but from this, however, ſome deduction is to be made, on account of the iſland-markets for ſugar (for reaſons not worth mentioning) being uſually found above their true rate.—The living price, therefore, neceſſary for the planter, according to theſe data, (for the accuracy of which the coloniſts are not reſponſible,) turn out 51*s.* inſtead of 46*s.* per hundred weight in this market; which does not vary much from that actually obtained from 1784 to 1790. (See the latter report of the ſugar refiners page 11, there being errors in their calculation at page 33.)

V. A ſtill greater miſtatement, than that which precedes, reſpects what the refiners ſay about the price of ſugar at Bourdeaux, in October laſt. — The paper-money, or aſſignats, of France, when firſt iſſued, loſt only when contraſted with gold and ſilver; but, when other articles were bought up to ſend to foreign markets, all exportable commodities roſe ſuddenly and rapidly (leaving other articles much as before). Previous to this moment, the rate of exchange certainly admitted cheap purchaſes, ſince ſugar, which coſt 37*s.* per hundred weight, would have coſt 56*s.* at the par of exchange. — Things are now altered; and our ſugars are not only nominally cheaper, but the intrinſic difference between them is increaſed,

owing to our raw ſugars, compared with theirs, being avowedly of ſuperior quality.

VI. The refiners are guilty of another miſrepreſentation, when they ſay, that no events in the French colonies operated on the Britiſh market, till the great revolt at St. Domingo;* whereas it is notorious, that Martinique remained torn in pieces by diſſentions during two years; and that neither Guadaloup nor Tobago have been wanting in their diſcords or diſtreſſes. Foreigners, who ſaw all theſe things cooly, as by-ſtanders, feared that ſome great calamity to cultiva-

* Having ſpoken of St. Domingo and its diſtreſſes, it will be allowable to relate an incident honourable to our countrymen, and which, therefore, cannot be made too public.

The firſt authentic news of the St. Domingo revolt was received in England, and thence communicated, by expreſs, to the houſe of Meſſrs. Collow, Carmichael, and Co. at Havre de Grace, in France. —— Theſe gentlemen, inſtead of uſing the intelligence to their own profit in that and other French ports, by buying up ſecretly Weſt-India produce, in order to avail themſelves of its approaching riſe; went directly to the municipality, made public their information, and got couriers diſpatched to the other ports and to the National Aſſembly at Paris, in order to put every ſeller in France on a par with the buyer. The deſign ſucceeded, and, on the pittance of colonial produce then remaining in the hands of the firſt importers, which was thus enhanced in value, perſons intereſted in the French colonies, have for a time been enabled to ſupport themſelves. The French were grateful, the Britiſh name was honoured, and the parties, it is believed, do not to this moment repent the generous conduct they purſued.

tion

tion would be the reſult; and *their fears* ſoon raiſed ſugars in the European markets.

In extenuation for the refiners, it muſt here be allowed, that they do not pretend to know much beyond their own country and trade; — otherwiſe it muſt have been expected from them, in candour, to have ſtated, that prices have long been riſing, not only from various cauſes which have before been mentioned, but from drought, hurricanes, war, and an inſect called the *borer*, which, though now on the decline, had lately ſuddenly infeſted moſt of the Leeward iſlands, and has injured the Britiſh empire in particular, for ſeveral years, to the amount of more than half a million ſterling per annum. In ſhort, the European market has never once, if we may uſe that expreſſion, been thoroughly ſaturated with ſugar ſince the American war. But, happily, the Engliſh iſlands are now doing their part handſomely, if they are allowed to do it *freely*; the cauſes of ſcarcity being rapidly diſappearing, and their cultivation having evidently greatly advanced, ſince, in ſpite of *every diſaſter*, the quantity imported is allowed to be augmented ſince the American war; and therefore, without diſaſters, the quantity would have been greatly increaſed.

VII. This leads to another conſideration.—It is ſaid by the refiners or their friends, that it is the nature of our ſugar-colonies to be ſubject to *extreme uncertainties* in their crops.

Reſpecting,

Reſpecting, however, the preſent deficiency of ſugar in Europe, (I ſay in Europe, for, Great Britain has received as well its uſual ſupply for home-conſumption, as its uſual ſurplus for re-exportation,) let it not be attributed to the Britiſh planter, ſince it is ſolely owing to the calamities of the French iſlands; calamities which have by no means originated from the accidents of nature, but from political revolutions, external and internal. Beſides, whatever is the evil, the bill profeſſes to undertake its cure, as far as reſpects Great Britain. — As to natural evils in general, they are not more prevalent in our ſugar-colonies, than in other countries within the tropics. Nature acts there on a larger and more gigantic ſcale. Their rain, their thunder, their ſtorms, their inſects, are all remarkable in their uſual appearances; and, when they riſe beyond their common level, they are truly extraordinary. But this ought not to excite any new alarms. The ſugar-iſlands are our old acquaintance: we have before us their hiſtory for more than a century and a half; we know their beſt and their worſt; and that caſualties in them can only be temporary. — If we think that the Eaſt Indies are freer than the Weſt from natural diſaſters, remember the celebrated famine of Bengal, and look at the late accounts from Lord Cornwallis and other quarters of India. Obſerve, too, our farmers in Great Britain, who, notwithſtanding the varieties of their culture, which ren-

der

der a total failure of all their crops peculiarly difficult, yet are aſſailed by a thouſand viciſſitudes; moſt of which, however, as they leave their landlords untouched, becauſe depending upon fixed rents, permit our landed gentlemen to remain ignorant of the fluctuations belonging to their own climate and ſituation.

VIII. But, ſay the refiners, our refining-trade is decreaſed. — This is readily allowed; but the conſumption of *ſugar in general* has increaſed: for, it is conſumed raw inſtead of refined. But this is an explanation of the nature of the objection, rather than a full removal of its amount. It muſt, therefore, be confeſſed, that, by the check given to the refinery, in conſequence of the high prices of raw ſugar, the public ſuffers in its gratifications, and the refiner in his trade. — But the anſwer, ſo often reſorted to, again occurs: — the bill endeavours to remedy the evil, and the coloniſts aſſent to the mode employed by it for the purpoſe.

IX. In a remaining particular, we have to complain, it is to be hoped, rather of the want of caution, than of the ill-intention, of the refiners; for it is certainly, in part, owing to their ſtatements, that the public conceive that a conſiderable bounty ſtill exiſts upon the export of refined ſugars.

There are both a fact and an explanation to ſtate in reply on this ſubject. — The *fact*, alluded to, is, that the

the total annual amount of the bounty, according to the ſhewing of the ſugar refiners themſelves, is only about £8000 per annum; which, to a tax amounting to a million per annum, bears the proportion of about ¼ per cent. a proportion which cannot in any view or to any perſon appear conſiderable.* The coloniſts,

* It is ſingular that the refiners have never given a comparative ſtate of the duty on raw ſugar and the bounty (ſo called) on refined ſugar as it now ſtands. Was this with the liberal view of leaving the public impreſſed with the idea, that the coloniſts ſtill enjoyed the full benefit of the *late* ſurplus bounty, upon which ſo much has been deſcanted? Such ſtratagems, if intended, are always ſhort lived.

The matter really ſtands thus, upon their own data compared with the ſtatute-book. Out of a ton of raw ſugar the refiners allow that they make nine cwt. of loaf and lump ſugar, and five cwt. of baſtard; but, by law, the drawback or bounty on the firſt article, at 26*s.* per cwt. is £11 . 14; and, upon the latter, at 15*s.* per cwt. is £3 . 15; making together £15 . 9. Deduct from this £15, the preſent duty on a ton of raw ſugar, and there remains only a bounty of 9*s.* even upon *this* calculation, for ſo much refined ſugar (namely, 14 cwt.) as correſponds to a ton, or 20 cwt. of raw ſugar.—This proportion, upon the total average-export of refined ſugar for nine years, (reckoning from 1783 to 1791, each incluſive,) gives about £8000, as above ſtated, for the total ſurplus of bounty; being in the proportion of about ¼ per cent. upon the ſum-total of balance of the preſent annual ſugar-tax after deducting drawbacks and bounties; and about $\frac{1}{33}$ part of the total of the bounty, as it is called; which bounty, it may be perceived, deſerves no other general name than that of a ſimple drawback.—The laſt of the comparative ſtatements on this ſubject, *exhibited by the refiners*, makes a loſs of £2 . 6 . 8 to the revenue, inſtead of 9*s.* as above, forming a difference of more than ſix to one.

however,

however, who have no other data to found themſelves upon, than the reports of the ſugar refiners, which are little to be praiſed for their impartiality, doubt even the exiſtence of the difference. But ſuffice it to ſay, that Mr. Pitt, who held the ſcales between the contending parties with an even hand, and who watched the turn with an eagle's eyes, will ſcarcely vary from the account here given.—So much for the *fact*.

Now for the *explanation* promiſed.—The ſtatute-book applies the word DRAWBACK to the tax repaid upon the exportation of *raw* ſugar, and the word BOUNTY to the money paid upon the exportation of what is *refined*. The word drawback accurately expreſſes its meaning; for, (excepting the gain to government, by intereſt, in conſequence of having had a depoſit of the tax for ſome time in its hands, and excepting the duty retained on the quantity waſted and plundered, while the ſugar continued in a Britiſh port,) the original duty, paid at importation, is refunded on exportation, without diminution or addition.—But the caſe was *once* different as to the bounty. Government, to encourage the refinery-trade, gave a bounty on refined ſugar, in addition to the drawback due upon it; and, in this ſtate, both amounts obtained the *collective name* of bounty. The memory of this ſituation of things ſtill continues its influence in preſerving to the drawback on refined ſugars the name of *bounty*; though, in effect, it is now become nearly

an exact *compenſation* for the duty paid on the extra quantity of raw ſugars *expended* in producing a given quantity of refined. — Thus it happens in trade as in politics, that names are often retained, when the inſtitutions to which they are applied have wholly changed their nature.

Thus far what has been ſaid, reſpecting the refiners, has been merely *defenſive* in the behalf of the colonies. But, the ſtatements of the refiners having gone far with the public in contributing to excite prejudices, it is neceſſary, by a few words, to reduce theſe ſtatements to their true value. For this purpoſe, only two remarks, in the way of criticiſms, will be neceſſary upon their conduct.

The firſt is, that the late high prices of refined ſugar are in part to be aſcribed to the ſugar refiners themſelves; which is proved as follows. — The difference of the value of the *average* of raw ſugars, compared with that of low lump ſugar, (which is the leaſt variable of the ſeveral ſpecies of refined ſugars,) was in fact, for the years 1788, 1789, and 1790, taking one year with another, found to be about 17*s.* per hundred weight. — One of the refiners who was examined before the Houſe of Commons, intimated, indeed, that the amount of this difference was much more than either 15*s.* or 20*s.* and certainly the higher is the price of the raw commodity, the greater does the difference

between

between the two articles become, (on account of the increaſe of loſs upon ſo much raw ſugar as is waſted in its converſion into refined.*) But, after every allowance of this kind, it is impoſſible to conceive that the difference has ever, for example, reached 26*s*. But it was admitted in evidence, that, during the laſt winter, this difference was carried, by the refiners, up to 36*s*. and when the "whiſper of the bill" afterwards operated, while raw ſugars only admitted a fall of 10*s*. per hundred weight, low lump ſugar became reduced 20*s*.—In ſhort, as the refiners alone were provided with the article which was in requeſt with foreigners, and as delay was requiſite for the proceſs by which its quantity was to be increaſed, they profited, like other traders, by the exigency of circumſtances.—In this, no one can blame them for any thing but inconſiſtency, and for reproaching others for what they have done themſelves; ſince nothing can be more reaſonable than that traders ſhould take advantage of occaſional gains, to compenſate for occaſional loſſes.

But, to proceed to the ſecond propoſed criticiſm on the conduct of the refiners.—Their new zeal, like that of the other proſelytes, is at preſent apparently ar-

* It is to be obſerved, that, during theſe years and until laſt Chriſtmas, there has generally been a riſing market; conſequently, the refiners profited conſtantly by the riſe of ſugars in the interval between their purchaſe of the raw ſugar, to the moment of ſelling it in its refined ſtate; amounting upon an average to ſeveral months.

dent for the public; but we are not therefore to give them credit for entire ſincerity, when we find that they have made common cauſe with the coloniſts for near ſixty years, in obtaining what *they* ſtate to be an improper bounty upon the exportation of refined ſugars (of which deſcription the whole export of ſugar to foreign parts had long conſiſted). It is notorious, that the coloniſts were wholly ignorant of the real amount of this bounty;* but not ſo the refiners. The fact was known to each and to all of them; and, while they benefited by it, the meaſure was right and was political. —But the ſcene has lately changed, and, with it, their opinion. When the price of refined ſugars roſe, ſo as to affect its conſumption in the home (which is its moſt conſiderable) market, and when their capital became ſo loſt in the high price of raw ſugars, that it would not enable them to go through the ſame quantity of *work*, upon which alone their gains depended; then, and very naturally, they ſounded an alarm. But they did it, methinks, a little unhandſomely; ſince a portion either of good fellowſhip, of modeſty, or charity, might have induced them to have omitted the opprobrious terms of exactors and monopoliſts, which they now apply without ceremony to their old companions.

* The Weſt-India meeting was, by a miſtake, led into a belief, that the difference between the average-price of raw ſugars and low lump ſugars was 40*s.* and made a propoſition to adminiſtration, founded upon this error, which was afterwards retracted on their part.

—It

— It is neceſſary, however, to do the refiners the juſtice to ſay, that the new politics of ſome of their body are not ſatisfactory to all of them; for, there are ſome who perceive, that, however the drawing back of the tax on ſugars, which are refined, may, for the moment, prejudice them, yet that permanently, and where prices are not exceſſive, the principle of it is both juſt to the coloniſts and beneficial to themſelves and to their country. No one will wonder therefore, if, upon a change of ſituation, thoſe very refiners, who are now moſt clamarous for an abolition of what is called the *bounty* and the drawback, ſhould be found petitioning to have an increaſe of the bounty to an amount more ſuitable to the meaning of that term.

So much for the refiners. — We now proceed to another and more dignified body; the antagoniſts of the coloniſts in the Houſe of Commons, who have made ſome few remarks in addition to thoſe previouſly ſuggeſted by the refiners.

Replies to ſome Remarks made in the Houſe of Commons.

I. One member intimated, that all the ſugar produced in the world does not equal all the demand. — But demand does not mean a mere wiſh to *conſume*, but

but an ability alſo to compenſate to the cultivator for his expences, combined with that wiſh. — The law of Providence is *nil ſine labore*; and that the actual ſupply has been at leaſt equal to this ſort of demand, we may conclude both from our always having had a ſurplus of Britiſh ſugar to export to foreign nations, and from immenſe means of increaſing the general ſupply of European nations exiſting in our own and foreign colonies, which have not yet been called into action.

II. The ſame gentleman ſtated that foreigners would (as he believed) take our ſurplus ſugars though burthened with more or leſs of the Britiſh tax remaining from its original importation. — But, if foreigners will purchaſe our ſugars in ſpite of a tax annexed, the complaints of the refiners, that they ſhall ſuffer by a bill which occaſionally prohibits the drawing back of the tax, cannot altogether be well founded.

III. Another remark, from the ſame quarter, (which in every view is one highly reſpectable,) was, that every ſhilling in the ſtandard fixed by the bill produces a difference of £75,000 without the duty, and £90,000 including it, in the value of the ſugars imported annually. — But, admitting the aſſertion to be in itſelf correct, what concluſion is to be drawn from it? Does not the queſtion ſtill remain, whether this ſhillling in the ſtandard is rightly placed or not; a large ſum like this being as heavy for one ſide to *loſe*

as

as it is for the other ſide to pay; and, indeed, more ſo, ſince the *whole property* of the ſugar-planter is attached to the price of his produce, while only a very ſmall part of that of the conſumer is intereſted in it? In ſhort, it ſeems improper to meaſure this queſtion in the way of amounts; the only queſtion as to the ſtandard being, *What is equitable?*

IV. A ſecond member affirmed poſitively, that the new law would raiſe the prices of ſugar. — But this is to ſuppoſe a perverſe public and little wiſdom in the framers of the bill; and, as was very pertinently replied, it is ſcarcely verified by the experience exhibited under the corn-bill. Is it becauſe ſugar by being kept at home is rendered plentiful, that its price is to increaſe? — But as this objection has been already fully conſidered; we ſhall only remark, that for all ſugar arriving in Great Britain, the prices, under the bill, *may* become lower, but (unleſs by a new increaſe of the export of refined ſugar) they *cannot become higher*.

V. A third gentleman obſerved, that the value of the *whole* exports to the Weſt Indies is not equal to the difference of profit which fell laſt year to the ſhare of the coloniſts. — But, without entering here into the chain of arguments connected with this topic, it ſeems ſufficient to remark, that the coloniſts, with little or no exception, reſide either here or in the iſlands; and that what of their profits is not exported, or kept to

be

be ſpent at home, is ſaved (as happens with other ſurplus incomes) to accumulate new wealth for Britiſh uſes.

VI. Several of the ſpeakers ſeemed by no means aware of the uſes of exportation. *Enough*, however, according to the adage, *is enough, and a little to ſpare.* It is hard to keep a reſervoir always repleniſhed, which is always in a ſtate of fluctuation, without a conſtant ſtream runs through it, to make irregularities diſappear. Exportation gives this ſtream. If we puſh the colonies too hard, they will abandon a part of our ſupply.*

Various other objections were treated in the courſe of the debate; but, as they have been noticed in

* "As the Britiſh conſumers receive their ſhare in the benefits "rendered by the monopoly-ſyſtem to the navigation, merchants, "and refiners, of Great Britain, they can in juſtice claim no more "than a right of pre-emption with regard to ſugar; and ought to "ſuffer the ſurplus, beyond their conſumption, to go to foreign "markets, without adding new burthens to thoſe already impoſed "by a circuitous voyage and various mercantile profits in favour "of the mother-country, which renders the article much dearer, "at the ſame nominal price, to foreigners than to themſelves. The "foreigner, independent of the expence of tranſporting the commodity to the place of his reſidence, buys nothing for which a "Britiſh ſubject chooſes to pay an equal price; which the body "of Britiſh conſumers are known to be better able to pay than any "other." — *Weſt-India Memorial to Miniſtry, February* 28, 1792.

the

the anſwers made to the refiners, and will be farther noticed in the ſecond part of this pamphlet, we ſhall haſten to give a moſt brilliant paſſage from a ſpeech made by Mr. Fox, in a debate during the American war, reſpecting the admiſſion of prize-ſugars to home-conſumption, as taken from the printed accounts of it.

'Mr. *Fox* ſpoke ably on the ſame ſide. * * * * "The "oppreſſive conſequences of the war on our Weſt- "India plantations (he ſaid) were more intolerable than "could be deſcribed. Beſides all the loſſes they ſuſtain- "ed, the price of ſhipping and inſurance was enor- "mouſly increaſed, and the expence of their home- "defence was greater in proportion than that of Great "Britain. The iſland of Jamaica alone expended annu- "ally £160,000 though her eſtabliſhment before the "war was only £60,000. What then was to be the "equivalent for ſuch burthens? how were they to "ſtruggle againſt all the calamities of war, but by ta- "king advantage of any caſual high price which their "commodities might bear in our market? But, in- "ſtead of this, *new innovations* were now attempted, "by which every proſpect of ſupport would be defea- "ted in future; and this on no other plan but a tempo- "rary ſcarcity of ſugar, which the events of war "alone had produced. Our convoy laſt year had "been taken; and, in conſequence of that, there could "not be found ſhipping to tranſport the growth of "our iſlands; but it was univerſally admitted, that the

" crop now on hand exceeded every thing that had " been remembered; and, in a ſhort time, a fleet " was expected with an ample ſupply for our mar- " kets.

" The noble lord had called the non-importation of " prize-ſugars a mere cuſtom-houſe regulation, and " therefore thought the rule might eaſily be diſpenſed " with; but he muſt inform his lordſhip, that a com- " pact *more ſolemn than any act of parliament could create*, " made that rule not to be infringed; for we had " monopoliſed the produce of our plantations, by " unnatural reſtrictions on their trade. This was the " only country in Europe in which they were permitted " by our laws to ſell their crops; ſurely then, by every " principle of reaſon and natural juſtice, they ſhould " alſo have an excluſive acceſs to our markets, a mo- " nopoly ſubſiſting on one ſide, neceſſarily implying " a monopoly alſo on the other. There was not " any written agreement, but there was *ſomething more* " *ſubſtantial*; there was monopoly againſt monopoly. " The Weſt-India planters were confined in the ſale of " their commodities to Britain, and Britain was confi- " ned to take thoſe commodities from them, and them " only. This tacit bargain was confirmed not by " words but by deeds. The planters enjoyed certain " privileges, and for thoſe privileges they gave ſome- " thing in return, an *ample equivalent*; ſo that there " was *quid pro quo*, which was allowed in the civil law,

" to

" to be a formal ratification of any compact or bar-
" gain;—but, as it would ſeem, parliament were *eager*
" *to ſeize*, but not ready to grant, the advantages of a
" reciprocal monopoly. When any thing is to be
" gained, 'we have a monopoly of your trade;' but
" when any thing is to be loſt, and it is ſaid, 'we plan-
" ters have a monopoly of your cuſtoms,' it is replied,
" we have a ſupreme juriſdiction over you, and are
" bound by no tacit or implied contracts.—According
" to this doctrine, (continued Mr. Fox,) the Weſt-
" India planters need never read a newſpaper or ga-
" zette; there is no room for the indulgence of curi-
" oſity. If any proſperous event happens, as the
" taking of a ſugar-iſland, their loſs is evident; ſince
" thereby the value of the growth of their plantations
" is diminiſhed. If, on the contrary, an adverſe ac-
" cident takes place, and that any of our iſlands
" be taken, the planter ſhares with others in the
" loſs. * * * *

" He obſerved, that if our *manufactory* was decay-
" ing, from the loſs of our iſlands, and conſequent
" want of commodity, to allow the importation of
" prize-ſugars could at beſt only be a temporary and
" precarious remedy: at the concluſion of the war,
" ſuch a reſource muſt neceſſarily fail; and, in the
" mean time, plunder was not an eligible baſis of
" trade. He admitted, indeed, that the ſugar-ma-
" nufacture in this country was going to decay;

" the reaſon was natural, we were loſing our ſugar-
" iſlands. But we were not to reſtore that ma-
" nufacture by ruining the planters; who *preſuming*
" *upon the monopoly*, had laid out their fortunes in
" ſugar-plantations, and who conſequently muſt be
" ruined if they cannot get as extenſive a market
" for their commodity as their plantations and ex-
" pences require.

" In the courſe of his ſpeech he obſerved ſome
" geſtures of Lord North, from which he pre-
" dicted that he ſhould have the honour of agree-
" ing with his lordſhip on this occaſion, and jeſ-
" ſtingly declared, that he ſhould not be too ſevere
" on the noble lord's meaſures in America, for
" fear of loſing ſo valuable a ſupport. He con-
" cluded with truſting that the houſe would not,
" by a haſty deciſion in favour of the petitioners,
" drive the planters to deſperation." — Thus far Mr. Fox.

It is impoſſible to leave the cauſe in better hands than thoſe of Mr. Fox. — The coloniſt, upon reading this maſterly paſſage, will naturally ſay with a ſigh, *Oh! ſi ſic omnia.*

Of

Of the Compacts ſubſiſting between Great Britain and her Colonies.

Since the period of the American war, which has ſeparated from us ſome of our principal colonies, without appearing much to diminiſh either our ſecurity or our proſperity; and, ſince a perſuaſion has taken place, that the Eaſt Indies are capable of furniſhing us with ſugar at reduced prices, a conſiderable number of perſons (in which, perhaps, may be included ſeveral members of adminiſtation) have at once diſputed the utility of our colonies, and ſtarted doubts as to their claims.* — It was natural, after diſapproving an object, to get rid of the obſtacles to diſcarding it. In this ſituation of things, then, ſeveral circumſtances have occurred highly alarming to the coloniſts. — In the late debate upon the *ſugar*-bill, a member high in office expreſſly declared, that he would never admit that any compact with the colonies exiſted, binding upon the mother-country; and another, no leſs eminent, intimated, that it was highly important that an early diſcuſſion ſhould take place, reſpecting the mutual monopoly claimed by the ſugar-

* See proofs of the late neglects ſhewn to the colonies very ably ſtated in *The Caſe of the Sugar-Colonies*, 1792, printed for Johnſon and Debrett.

colonies.

colonies. — In the debates upon the *ſlave-trade*, which had preceded this diſcuſſion, it was held by ſeveral, with equal openneſs and deciſion, that this country was, in general, under no bond to give indemnity or even relief for moſt of the loſſes which might follow from the ſudden abolition of the ſlave-trade. And, though ſome perſons generouſly allowed that inquiry ought to be made into the juſtice of the claim, yet it is to be feared, that its large amount will of itſelf be a ſufficient motive, with many, to queſtion its validity; though it is clear that if it is of a magnitude too great to be ſupported by the *whole* of the Britiſh empire, it is certainly too oppreſſive to fall ſingly upon a part of it.—But, whatever may be the amount of theſe claims, it is here deſigned to diſcuſs the ſolidity of their foundations; beginning more particularly with what reſpects the queſtion reſpecting ſugars.

Of the Compact reſpecting the double Monopoly.

Let us firſt, then, inquire into the nature of a *compact*, which, under whatever term ſignified, means a declaration, between two parties, of certain intentions, accompanied with more or leſs formality and explicitneſs, accordingly as the parties are reſpectively circumſtanced in point of equality and confidence. If

the

the parties are enemies or ſtrangers, the terms are not ſuppoſed to have any force and effect till ſigned and interchanged by the agents, and ratified by the principals. Between friends and perſons bound in a common intereſt, leſs ceremony is neceſſary, the common bond ſubſiſting on each ſide being uſually conſidered as comprehending and ſuperceding every other. — But of all compacts the leaſt formal, but, at the ſame time, not the leſs ſacred, are thoſe which occur between a legiſlature and its ſubjects. When a government has any thing to expect from a *ſubject*, expreſs ſtipulations are entered into, becauſe the ſubject is thought capable of want of faith; but, when the ſubject has any thing to expect from a legiſlature, it is enough that the legiſlature gives to its engagements the formality of a law; than which no obligation can be more imperative and reſtrictive upon the ſubject, nor more binding to thoſe enacting it. As the whole power lies on one ſide, ſo the law is expected to be obſerved with a double portion of ſcrupulouſneſs on the other. The compact (if we venture to make a parallel in the only point in which a parallel is admiſſible) approaches to the nature of that taking place between the Divinity and man; for which there are no parchments, no witneſſes, no ſanctions, to produce, but ſimply the ſolemn declaration of a power having in view the happineſs of the whole, and poſſeſſed of all the neceſſary authority for enforcing it.

If it be aſked then, what compact exiſts between the mother-country and its colonies? it is anſwered, that which is uſual between the powerful and weak, between patrons and their clients, between parents and their children; namely its *declarations*. Some of the declarations of a legiſlature are indeed by their very nature changeable. A civil regulation, a penal law, a military proviſion, theſe and many other points are mutable in their very eſſence; becauſe the *end* alone of them is important, which is as explicit, generally, as it is important; and, becauſe the means for attaining this end are commonly capable of being varied, without diſtreſſing any honeſt individual. The ſame may be ſaid of other laws, where either the end or the means they have in view are *temporary*;—but where the end is of a different deſcription, or where the means have of themſelves acquired magnitude enough to be conſidered as an end, the queſtion altogether aſſumes another complexion.

In the firſt origin of a law, to inquire into the ſincerity of the intentions of its framers would be deemed diſreſpectful and idle; but, where time has rendered the law venerable, not by inattention or diſuſe, but by frequent recognition and inceſſant practice; when it has been confirmed by ſubſidiary proviſions, applauded by parties who always differ upon other ſubjects capable of difference, is taught in ſchools, aſſerted by authors, univerſally imitated by neighbouring nations, and ſealed by blood in many extenſive and burthenſome wars;

when

when the youngeſt and oldeſt of our living ſtateſmen have been alike forward in its ſupport; and when a property, equal in value to that of a third of the national debt, is built upon the baſis of it; at ſuch a period of the exiſtence of the law, to expreſs a doubt whether or not it has attained the eſſence and firmneſs of a compact, is to give ſuſpicions, that it is a doubt of convenience rather than of ſyſtem, of policy rather than of juſtice. — When the law recommends any enterprize, it is not of the nature of the recommendation of *one individual* to another, where the iſſue reſts on the adopter of the advice, rather than on the giver; but when legiſlatures permit, and add recommendation to permiſſion, they ſanction and they promiſe; and, if the perſonal ſucceſs of the enterprize lies with the party engaged in it, protection, at leaſt, is ſolemnly pledged to it by the power framing the law.

This ſubject will be reſumed upon general principles when we ſpeak of what is due, in caſe of an abolition of the ſlave-trade; but, at preſent, it is time to refer to the long and ſolid tiſſue of laws, reſpecting the double monopoly, ſubſiſting between Great Britain and the Weſt Indies; each portion of which tiſſue derives force from its connection with others, and no part of it is ſtronger than that which has been lateſt framed. For this purpoſe the reader is deſired ſeriouſly to conſult the paper contained in the *Appendix*, intitled, the Legal Claim, &c.

To the hoſt of laws there cited, a multitude of others might have been added; and it is believed that a challenge may be given to any one to find a ſingle law contravening their general ſpirit in the whole ſtatute-book, at leaſt in modern times; or yet a ſingle clauſe expreſſing an intimation, that the ſyſtem contained in them was either limited, temporary, or in the ſtyle of an experiment; obſervations which will appear ſtill more forcible, when we conſider the laws reſpecting the ſlave-trade.—The paper in queſtion is known to have been very ſuddenly drawn up; and, ſince its adoption by the Weſt-India meeting, a ſentence has been inſerted by its author, which will be found included in brackets in its 6th page.

After a peruſal of this paper, of which the purport (till the period that has been mentioned) has been confirmed by every ſpecies of conference with adminiſtration from time immemorial, as well as by every debate in parliament, the reader will determine whether men of plain ſenſe, ſuch as are fit for colonizing and for merchandize, can have extracted any other meaning from the ſpirit of the laws in queſtion, than that which they have adopted; and whether blame can reſt upon them for having gradually ſtaked ſeventy millions ſterling on their pledge, except upon the ground of their having had too eaſy a faith in any thing belonging to politics; a cenſure to which they may be forced to yield, without

without its ſerving as any juſtification to thoſe who ſhall oppreſs them.

We ſhall ſucceſſively bring other arguments into view, reſpecting the claim of the coloniſts to a double monopoly, in the courſe of anſwering the following objections. For example,

I. It is ſaid that *free trade* has great merits.

Perhaps there is no perſon, who is more deeply convinced of the importance of a free trade to the arts, civilization, proſperity, and univerſal fraternity of mankind, than the author of theſe remarks. He is even ready to allow, that the Weſt-India colonies have been built on two falſe principles: firſt, ſlavery, with its unfortunate companion the ſlave-trade; and, ſecondly, a reciprocal monopoly. But theſe principles were Britiſh in their origin, not colonial. We now ſee the error on all ſides: — but what is to be done? — To ſpeak at preſent only of that reſpecting the *monopoly*, had the coloniſts ſet off fairly, none would have embarked or continued in the iſlands, but upon principles which experimentally would have defied foreign rivalſhip of all ſorts. An artificial ſyſte[illegible]wever, was ſubſtituted: we planned, and the co[illegible]executed; and, if we deſert them, they muſt ne[illegible]ſarily become the victims. Property in the iſlands has ſhifted hands ſo often, that eſtates ſtand chiefly on the baſis of purchaſe at *forced* prices, or, if we pleaſe to uſe the term, at *patent* prices, inſtead of running in lines of family deſcent; and

theſe prices were *prices forced by the ſyſtem which Great Britain has enacted.*

But it may be ſaid, are things never to change? — Yes, if a change is wanted, nothing is neceſſary but time. The ferment is rapidly at work: *the opinion of your juſtice is greatly ſhaken:* eſtates in the Weſt Indies, as has been obſerved, are not, as in England, matters of pride and of inheritance, but objects of trade; and, in the circulation of them, Weſt-India property will ſoon arrive at a truer level. Men will arrange their family affairs, and merchants will lend their money, with a view to the new ſyſtem;—but it is unjuſt to the laſt degree to precipitate this proceſs, which, after all, is only rendering the injury gradual, inſtead of ſudden. In ſhort, their golden days are over in the iſlands, and we wiſh to end their iron days by the abolition of the ſlave-trade, and to bring them back to days of innocence and peace, but we take care they ſhall not be piping days. We have, *in effect*, ſaid of the colony-ſyſtem, (as it will ſoon be proved that we have *expreſsly* ſaid of the ſlave-ſyſtem,) what we do at preſent of our own conſtitution; we have ſaid of each, *eſto perpetua!* Let us not then repent in anger and in raſhneſs, but remember the maxim *feſtina lentè*, and uſe a gentle ſpeed, a cautious haſte. Even this will violate our faith to thoſe who keep and to thoſe who ſell eſtates, as well as to their creditors; and will only be harmleſs to the new buyers of eſtates. — But, as the reſolution of perſons in

power

power ſeems now to be taken, to aſſume the lion's ſhare of all which is here in diſpute; nothing ſeems to remain for the colonies but the choice of the eaſieſt ruin, which ſeems to be that here alluded to.

II. But it will be ſaid, that the *mutual* monopoly, claimed by the Weſt Indies, is unfair; ſince it is not a monopoly which is *mutually equal*.—It would take long to diſcuſs this queſtion; and, after what has juſt been ſaid, it ſeems a ſuperfluous diſcuſſion. Beſides, it muſt be recollected, that, on our ſide, we have ſuperadded a claim to make *commercial regulations* for the colonies, independent of thoſe which relate to the monopoly; a claim which has been attended in its exerciſe with conſiderable rigours; of which the abolition of the ſlave-trade, when accompliſhed, will probably ſerve as a memorable example, and which, therefore, muſt count for ſomething in the balance.

But let what follows be coolly conſidered.—Taking one year with another for twenty years together, the intereſt of the money, gained upon a given capital in the iſlands, is extremely moderate. At the ſame time, the natural inſtability of colonial property is ſuch, that eſtates are ſold for twelve or fourteen years purchaſe. In war, there are great anxieties occurring from the enemy; in peace, as well as war, great cauſe of uneaſineſs is now to be expected from an innovating legiſlature at home; at all times there is a frequent abſence, from friends and connections, requiſite; and the

loſs

loſs of health is ſo notorious, that the gains of the coloniſt ought to be rapidly acquired, in order to correſpond with the rapid waſte of life which occurs in attaining them. Beſides, it is a very true, though a very old, remark, that the colony-wealth becomes the wealth of the mother-country; and not only enriches our traders, but raiſes the purchaſe of our lands, and yields a valuable article to exchange with foreign nations, to ſay nothing of our navy

But, if the monopoly ſhall at any time be withdrawn from the coloniſts, it muſt, at the ſame time, be equally renounced by Great Britain. On the ſide of Great Britain, however, the complete abandonment of the ſyſtem will be peculiarly difficult; ſince there are few articles belonging to her, which monopoly does not, in ſome ſhape or other, invade, ſo as to enhance the coſt of moſt of the articles which ſhe furniſhes. — In the mean time, one cannot but ſmile at the impatience with which this ſyſtem is adhered to by the nation, reſpecting its colonies, while it ſubmits to its tyranny in a multitude of other important inſtances, without murmur, or even notice.*

III. But

* "The indifference with which ſome treat the obligation in "the compact, for the ſyſtem of reciprocal monopoly, on the "ſide of Great Britain, makes it neceſſary to notice the rigour "with which an obſervance of it is nevertheleſs enforced upon "the colonies. Not only the coloniſt is obliged to depoſit, in a

"ſtate

III. But it is objected more particularly, and even tauntingly, that our coloniſts furniſh the articles they ſupply

" ſtate particularly ſubject to loſs by drainage and to expence of " carriage, the chief of his produce for ſale in Great Britain, but " he is reſtricted to Great Britain for his principal purchaſes, and " to Britiſh ſhips for his ſole conveyances, even in time of war, " when he might avail himſelf both of the cheapneſs and conve- " nience of neutral bottoms. He is allowed indeed to purchaſe " building-timber, packages, live ſtock, and certain articles of pro- " viſion, from the neighbouring continent of North America: but " though, from the circumſtances of the iſlands, his wants of theſe " articles are progreſſively multiplying, he muſt obtain them under " ſuch diſadvantages, that, when the obſtacles attending the ſale " of his melaſſes and rum are conſidered, it is 100 per cent. be- " yond their price before the American war, and 50 per cent. be- " yond the prices at which rival colonies may obtain them. It " happens unfortunately, alſo, that the ſame cauſes, which produce " a ſhortneſs of crops, commonly occaſion an increaſe of expences, " from an accompanying dearth of proviſions. And yet this mo- " nopoly-ſyſtem is ſo rigidly purſued by Great Britain, that not " only the convenience and the neceſſities of the iſlands have given " way to it, but a ſacrifice to our navigation-laws has even been " made of the *lives* of thoſe negroes whoſe happineſs is the pre- " tended object of many who clamour againſt the coloniſts. Such " is a part of the price, then, which the planter pays for the benefit " of an excluſive market in the mother-country, the comparative " value of which is yearly declining by the price of ſugar riſing in " foreign colonies. It would be hard indeed, therefore, after ſub- " jecting him to regulations, which, however beneficial they may " be thought to the mother-country, are, in too many inſtances, " and in an increaſing degree, oppreſſive to the colonies, if he is

" to

ſupply on dearer terms than thoſe of other nations.—Their articles, however, cannot be greatly dearer; becauſe we have always exported refined ſugars to contend with the ſugars of foreign coloniſts. It is true, that, during many years paſt, the real bounty, given upon refined ſugars, powerfully ſupported our coloniſts in this rivalſhip. The intrinſic diſproportion of price in ſugars, however, has, of late, gradually diminiſhed;

" to be deprived of the benefit of a fluctuation of prices, from " which, at times, he muſt neceſſarily be the ſufferer."

" Between the years 1780 and 1787 the iſland of Jamaica loſt " 15,000 negroes from famine, or bad proviſions, and conſequent " diſeaſes, beſides ſimilar miſchiefs in ſome of the other iſlands. " Proviſions, however, are a neceſſary of life, and ſugar is not a " neceſſary; the price of proviſions alſo was, in various caſes, " quadrupled to the coloniſts at ſome moments, and ſugar has " ſcarcely doubled its price in England; the laws reſtricting the " American intercourſe are permanent, and the inconvenience re- " ſpecting the price of ſugar is temporary; laſtly, much difficulty, " ariſing from the reſtrictions to the intercourſe between the United " States and the Britiſh Weſt-Indies, was foreſeen, but the na- " tural and political calamities operating upon the price of ſugar " are ſuch as are wholly unprecedented in the nature of human af- " fairs."

" In the numerous wars in which Great Britain has engaged, " and of which they have borne more than their proportion both of " the evil and of the burthen, though they have often been the " prize contended for, they have never been the origin of the con- " tention." — *Weſt-India Memorial to Miniſtry, February* 28, 1792.

and,

and, at the preſent inſtant, Britiſh ſugars have become cheaper than thoſe of France, even allowing for the difference of French exchange.* — The reſult of theſe compariſons is the more favourable to the Britiſh coloniſt, as he had ſuffered greatly by the ravages of the late war, and found the Britiſh market bare of ſugars after the war; and has ſince had armaments, hurricanes, and other natural calamities, to alarm the buyers or to render his ſupplies ſcanty, beſides the diſadvantages incurred by his being now more reſtrained as to the American intercourſe, than the French coloniſt. In ſhort, beſides ſupplying the Britiſh and Iriſh conſumption, an exportation of our ſugar has always exiſted; and the real embarraſſment of government, during the late controverſies about ſugar, chiefly aroſe from a ſudden exportation, which cauſed large amounts of the ſugar-tax to be refunded; and the remedy, firſt thought of for the evil, was ſtopping that exportation: — ſo that though we have had, as is well known, an increaſing conſumption at home, yet we have ſtill received ſugars enough for ourſelves and ſome for our neighbours.

The objection however, before us, will not be ſatisfactorily anſwered, without ſaying a word or two on

* To make this argument of ſome effect, it muſt be remarked, that, notwithſtanding the convulſions in the French iſlands, they have ſtill furniſhed more than enough ſugar to France for its home conſumption.

the comparative ſtate of the Britiſh and French ſugar-colonies; — the fundamental difference between which appears to reſpect their *ſoil*. Land has only *gradually* offered itſelf for cultivation on our ſide: and therefore (for a reaſon given before, namely, *havit*) has been conſtantly dear; for it will be remembered, that our original ſtock of land was firſt increaſed by the treaty of Utrecht in 1713; next, in 1740, by a treaty with the Maroon negroes in Jamacia, which tranquillized and admitted of cultivation in an immenſe tract of country; and, laſtly, by the ſeveral valuable iſlands ceded by the French at the peace of 1763. — The French, on their ſide, have obtained their lands cheap, by having had a vaſt field opened at *once*, as well as from having the proſpect of large additions at Cayenne, and the poſſibility of acquiring even the Spaniſh part of St. Domingo (which is twice as large as their own part). Land too with them was at all times diſtributed *gratis* to new ſettlers; and exemptions from various burthens during a courſe of years were ſuperadded in their favour. The ſoil alſo, generally ſpeaking, was far more fertile than ours; which not only allowed of the general advantages attending that circumſtance, but admitted of the particular ſyſtem of ratoons, that is, of a crop of young canes ſpringing annually from the old roots.* It has before been obſerved, that

* This ſaved the labour of planting annually, as well as what is to be deemed equivalent to a loſs by fallow; the plants requiring fourteen

that French raw ſugar is inferior in quality to ours; a circumſtance which is certainly to be counted (though it has generally been forgotten) in the compariſon of prices. Their white ſervants alſo are cheaper; their negroes, though dearly bought, are more ſeverely worked; and, of late, they have had the benefit of a freer intercourſe with North America, than we have allowed our own colonies. Their courſe for navigation alſo in various reſpects is better circumſtanced. But what perhaps, above all, contributed moſt to their late ſuperiority, was the eminent advantage poſſeſſed in various particulars by the colony of St. Domingo; among which may be reckoned, the cheapneſs of its cattle, and the facility of other lucrative trade, particularly for bullion, owing to the contiguity of the Spaniards: and the great influence of this immenſe colony, in bearing down the price of the produce of the ſmaller French iſlands, (which muſt have been chiefly effected by keeping down the value of their *ſoil,)* will readily be acknowledged. It is but candid however to allow, that the French coloniſts have enjoyed no ſuperiority whatever in point of freight, nor till of late have they been fairly dealt with as to their rum.—If the French ſpend leſs money in their ſugar-buildings, and are more frequently reſident on the ſpot

fourteen months growth, and the ratoons (or *rejettons)* only twelve; without being attended with a proportionate difference of produce, all things conſidered.

than our coloniſts, it is a reproach, rather than an excuſe, to the latter; ſince theſe are benefits which are certainly equally acceſſible on their ſide, had there been a diſpoſition to ſeek them.

Of the Compact reſpecting the African Slave-Trade.

Our legiſlature has encouraged the Weſt-India colonies to raiſe produce, not only for the home-market, for Ireland, and for our other colonies, but alſo, in the moſt expreſs manner, for the ſupply of *foreign* nations. Of this the references in the Appendix will furniſh various proofs; though none other is wanting than the fact of a drawback and even a bounty having, for many years, down to the preſent period, been given on the exportation of *ſugar* to foreign parts.—But, at the ſame time that we have encouraged production as an end, we expreſſly encouraged the importation of African ſlaves as the *means*; and we even thought the trade in them ſo innocent, that we were anxious to become purveyors of them to foreigners; as witneſs the memorable proceedings reſpecting the Aſſiento treaty. — Our encouragement here was general, without limit as to time or as to numbers. One charter, (granted to the Duke

Duke of York, and two of our queens, in partnerſhip with ſeveral others,* under the name of *the Royal Adventurers,)* which contained a clauſe for conveying three thouſand negroes annually to the Weſt Indies, was for the term of *one thouſand years.* Two acts of parliament on this ſubject will be found cited in the Appendix, pages 5 & 6, and their preambles (which are there given) leave no doubt as to the full adoption of the principle as applied to the Weſt Indies; and it is only by late deciſions that the property in negro ſlaves was determined not to ſubſiſt in Great Britain. — The act, of 23 Geo. II. ch. 31. which declares that the African trade was merely *advantageous* to Great Britain, but was *neceſſary* to ſupply a ſufficient number of negroes to the colonies at reaſonable rates; enacts, that the ſaid trade between Barbary and the Cape of Good Hope ſhall be open to *all* his majeſty's ſubjects, when and at ſuch times and in ſuch manner as they ſhall think fit,

* A noble lord has played with ſucceſs on the charter and laws here cited. — His *dramatis perſonæ*, however, as to the charter, might have been heightened by the mention of the two queens. The ſucceſs under this charter was ſuch as may be expected when Royal Adventurers engage in trade; but the charter, it muſt be remembered, was granted to the Duke of York by Charles II. in whoſe reign were paſſed moſt of the laws on which our colonial ſyſtem is founded. — It is farther ſingular, that the paſſages referred to, in the act immediately to be cited, (23 Geo. II. chap. 31,) have been overlooked on both ſides; though the act has repeatedly been publicly noticed on both ſides in the controverſy on the ſlave-trade.

without

without any reſtraint whatever (ſave as therein-after is expreſſed); and *all* ſuch traders are *for ever* thereafter to be incorporated by the name of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, and are, by the ſame name, to have *perpetual ſucceſſion*. It is true, that the 29th clauſe of this act prohibits *kidnapping* of the natives, but it does ſo without teaching any abhorrence of the ſlave-trade; for it is only ſaid, that this ſhall not be done *to the prejudice of the ſaid trade*; in conſequence of which, half of the penalty of one hundred pounds goes to the company, for maintaining the African forts; which, almoſt without exception, were deſtined to protect the ſlave-trade, and which are to this hour ſupported for the ſame purpoſe by annual grants from the Britiſh parliament.—After theſe ſpecimens, we ſhall take no farther trouble in citing charters, parliamentary proceedings, or national treaties and meaſures, on this ſubject, the principle in queſtion being eſtabliſhed paſt the poſſibility of diſpute.

The ſlave-trade, thus in effect granted without limits to the coloniés, has, however, been attempted to be limited by the colonies themſelves, and in particular by thoſe ſituated upon the North American continent;* but altogether in vain, on account

* This aſſertion is made upon no leſs authority than that of Dr. Franklin, and it will be confirmed by the following citation from Anderſon's Hiſtory of Commerce, 4to edition, vol. 3, p. 191. "The

count of the ſuperior influence of the African merchants, who have oppoſed the king's aſſent to ſuch laws. Mr. Dundas's well-judged propoſal, that no aged negroes ſhould be imported into our colonies, has long been anticipated by the legiſlature of Jamaica, which paſſed a law to that effect in 1772; but, to this law, the king's ſanction was refuſed in 1774, after a formal hearing before the privy council, owing to the interference above alluded to. — Thus circumſtanced, then, were the coloniſts waranted to ſuſpect any ſcruples in the Britiſh legiſlature on a ſubject, where what is right to-day cannot be wrong to-morrow, but one unvariable principle muſt at all times decide?

As to *morality* on this occaſion, the coloniſts have at all times viewed it through the medium of the mother-country. The Britiſh laws are not merely trading laws: our legiſlature is a cenſor of morals, and even a ſuperintender of religion, not only prohibiting ſabbath-breaking, wanton ſwearing, and the like; but even ſcrutinizing into the ſpecies of religion adopted by its ſubjects; which may be ſeen as well in the caſe of the teſt-laws, as in the horrid ſtatutes, for whoſe repeal Mr. Fox lately moved in the Houſe of Commons. The king, who forms one branch of the legiſlature,

" The following *complaint* has lately been made to the board " trade and plantations, viz. In New York there is a duty of two " pounds laid on all negroes imported from Africa, and of four " pounds on all negroes imported from any other place.

is

is the ſupreme head of our national church; and all the reverend prelates of the realm make part of another branch (where alſo judges are conſtantly aſſiſting, ſkilled in the principles of natural law and natural right, for the purpoſe of aiding its counſels.)—Indeed the very attempt now carrying on in the legiſlature for the abolition of the ſlave-trade, what is it, but a ſuppoſed meaſure of humanity and juſtice; and therefore befitting its attention? as was, nearly in ſo many words, ſignified by the Commons to the Lords, at a late conference, appointed for that purpoſe.* Laws paſſed and proceedings had, under all theſe circumſtances, during near a century and a half, cannot but have marked the moral ſentiments, as well as the political opinion, of the legiſlature upon this ſubject.—The coloniſts therefore, in this trade, have only been paſſive: we provided negroes, and they bought them; in ſhort,

* The ſociety for propagating the goſpel in foreign parts has given its ſanction in like manner with the preceding reſpectable perſonages to colonial ſlavery; in conſequence of having poſſeſſed property cultivated by ſlaves and added to the number of them by purchaſe, as well as of having leaſed their land to others to be tilled by ſlaves, in order with the returns produced thence to teach the *Chriſtian faith*.

Blackſtone, ſays, that *Chriſtianity is part of the laws of England*; and accordingly his firſt chapter on offences reſpects thoſe againſt God and religion. Will any one, then, after reading that curious chapter, affirm, that parliament is to be deemed not to have taken cognizance of the morality of the ſlave-trade and of ſlavery till the preſent moment?

they

they bought both negroes and eſtates, each requiring large additions of other negroes, becauſe the authorities conſtituted for that purpoſe, pronounced it lawful for a *thouſand years* to come, and even *for ever*.

Has the above right, then, of acquiring negroes at any time been forfeited? — Let us boldly open the diſcuſſion, which the ſagacity of the perſons eſpouſing the oppoſite party will not ſuffer to eſcape them. — We may obſerve, then, upon this ſubject, as follows. Firſt, the coloniſts have gone upon the following plan, which is the plan of every great city; namely, to import their labourers, rather than to breed them; and, as they imported them for working in the field, they naturally choſe (as we do whenever the occaſion juſtifies a difference) men, rather than women. Hence an inequality between the ſexes, which polygamy concurred to aggravate; and the remainder of the men becoming thus ſtill more diſproportionate in number to the women, licentiouſneſs and its attendant diſeaſes followed, as uſual in ſuch caſes, to the certain obſtruction of population. Secondly, it will not be imputed as a crime to the coloniſts to have been unable to cure or prevent the propagation of certain African diſeaſes, as they have in vain employed a numerous and ſkilful band of medical perſons for that purpoſe. Neither is it their crime, that children, in ſpite of all their efforts, find a particular day ſucceeding their birth, too often becoming fatal to them; a plain proof that ſe-

verity has no ſhare in ſuch mortality. Neither yet is it their crime not to have conſidered the ſlave-trade in a point of view, in which we have never ourſelves conſidered it till within theſe four years; and reſpecting which we had not favoured them with the ſlighteſt warning, not having ſent even proper clergymen among them to enlighten and improve them.

As to their *laws*, whether cruel or whether mild, our king and privy council have ſanctioned every one of them; without which ſanction none would have been valid, and reſpecting which ſanction many members of the privy council, now preſſing for the abolition of ſlave-trade, will find themſelves deeply committed. — If obſolete laws, however, are to be deemed the type of the feelings and practice of a country, with what ſelf-reproach muſt we not look at our *own* ſtatute-book, where ſectaries are often found conſidered as deſerving more ignominious and ſtricter treatment than negro-ſlaves?* But, that ſuch laws are not to be conſidered as

* Proſecutions on the ſubject of witchcraft were only put an end to by 9 Geo. II. chap. 5; the laws on that ſubject having been proved, not many years before, *not* to have been ſleeping laws.

As an eminent leader in the Houſe of Commons, not leſs remarkable for his candour than his ſagacity, has cenſured the Weſt Indians for drawing an argument from what happens as to witchcraft in Africa; it is proper to remark, that they only affirm that perſons are there *puniſhed* for witchcraft; though they might add, that, under the *cloak* of witchcraft, various arts are practiſed; ſuch as exciting

as ſo indicative in the opinion of the Houſe of Commons, and eſpecially of its great leader, as alſo of the biſhops, we may conclude, from their not concurring with Mr. Fox in a wiſh for an immediate repeal of all ſuch, or even of the worſt of them. Beſides, Jamaica paſſed its great act for amending its ſlave-laws, ſpontaneouſly and upon its own ſuggeſtion, before the ſubject underwent a parliamentary diſcuſſion here; and ſeveral of the iſlands, particularly Grenada and Jamaica, have ſince paſſed, or are paſſing, acts for producing ſtill farther amendments; each overlooking that *danger of circumſtances* ariſing from the feelings of the ſlaves at this critical juncture, which, by the ſame precedent of the Houſe of Commons, reſpecting a reform in religious as well as civil matters, it ſeems might have been procraſtinated or modified without meriting cenſure.

But the actual *conduct* of the coloniſts to the negroes may be ſaid to become a fair object of inquiry. — But has it not always been open to inquiry? Have their clergy, who are all appointed by the crown; has their dioceſan, the biſhop of London; have thoſe other dignitaries in the ſociety for propagating the goſpel in foreign parts; have theſe ever remonſtrated with them

exciting terror in the mind, and giving drugs (which are often fatal) to affect the body, of which many inſtances are exhibited among the negroes in the Weſt Indies. — But it is enough for them to prove that witchcraft is *believed* without proving that it is *real*.

upon this ſubject? Have our governors, and military and other officers, ever formally complained of them? — Hear what our governors and officers have ſtated in evidence at the bar of both of our Houſes of Parliament, as well as to the king in privy council; and diſtinguiſh carefully between their *evidence* as to facts, and their *opinions* as to conſequences; obſerving that the firſt cannot eaſily be miſtaken, whatever may be thought of the ſecond. It is true, indeed, that ſome have inſinuated, that the coloniſts have always aſſumed a caution reſpecting their ſlaves in the preſence of theſe reſpectable perſonages; but is it not idle to ſuppoſe, that concealment can have been ſucceſsful with perſons conſiderable in number, and ſeveral of whom have viewed the iſlands in various capacities; or that ſuch perſons ſhould not, even in their journies, have been able to take cruelty by ſurprize, if it had been general? — But we ſay, that at leaſt ſome of our coloniſts have incurred guilt by their oppreſſions. Agreed; but have *all* of them done ſo? Have their abſent merchants, their mortgagees, and other creditors, or the foreigners who have lent them money, been partakers in it? — Puniſh the guilty; give to *them* perſonally no indemnity: — but do not meaſure the guilt of any by their want of ſucceſs in keeping up their population; a criterion, which it would be hard to reſt upon too far, at the moment when we ſay that their loſſes are in general ſo nearly ſupplied by breeding, that they

may

may now ſurrender the reſource of importation without much inconvenience.

Laſtly, it may be queried, Whether the *nature* of the injury, which the coloniſts are like to ſuſtain by a ſuppreſſion of ſlave-trade, is ſuch as ſuperſedes their title to indemnity? — And to this I anſwer, that their agricultural eſtabliſhments are, by their nature, permanent, eſpecially that part of them which conſiſts in the ſoil; alſo that they are not convertible to other objects; and that they are of large amount as to value, and have become the ſubject of pledges to many. The ſugar-cane, in particular, requires large manufactories for making either raw or clayed ſugar, as well as for rum; and to theſe muſt be added other buildings formed in conſequence; as alſo aqueducts, reſervoirs, roads, &c. &c.

It is by ſome, indeed, argued, that men muſt expect a fluctuation in the laws of all countries. — This may be true, where the object is fluctuating; but permanent objects require permanent laws, eſpecially where they are of a magnitude to form general ſyſtems. They are deſigned to ſpeak in plain terms to unlettered men, and to prompt and guide them in their actions; and, where ages have elapſed, practice becomes a proof, as well as a ſacred warrant of the intention. — To give a contrary account of the legiſlation, is to make it a monſter, ruin attends whoſe motions. It is giving to legiſlators themſelves the following language:

language: "Beware of us, you who are ſubject to "us: we have not only the power, but the caprice, "of tyrants: we encourage to day and open to you "the long *viſto* of for ever, and to-morrow we re-"tract and dig a gulph to overwhelm you: we "urge and we recall: we expect every thing from "you, and are bound to nothing for ourſelves."—— What trade or agriculture can ſupport this verſatility and want of principle? And who will riſk their lives and health under ſuch a legiſlature?—Money, depoſited in national funds, is notoriouſly liable to uncertainties, and becomes a ſpecies of gambling; but, when the fatal blank occurs, it is there the act of neceſſity. But here no pecuniary neceſſity being pleaded, meaſures of municipal law demand the utmoſt ſtability, juſtice, and clearneſs. — We may venture, therefore, to aſſert, that, if the fund for creating an indemnity were obtainable at free coſt, from other quarters, none would doubt as to the principle here contended for.—to be convinced of which, let us only look at our own conduct at home. When Mr. Burke wiſhed to aboliſh offices uſeleſs and even dangerous, he ſaid, compenſate; when Mr. Pitt formerly deſired to extinguiſh the rotten boroughs, he ſaid, compenſate; and the ſame was Mr. Dundas's language, with reſpect to the African ſhips, in caſe of aboliſhing the ſlave-trade; though theſe ſhips were neceſſarily temporary, and periſhing in their nature;

as

as well as convertible to other objects. Shall we protect, then, only the inhabitants of Great Britain? Is it true with us, that to be removed from ſight is to be removed from care? Is it juſt to rob Peter to pay Paul? Impoſſible. — Our coloniſts did, indeed, hold themſelves bound to ſubmit to loſſes from war, and from foreign rivalſhip occurring in foreign markets, and even from the interference of lands which might hereafter be ceded for the purpoſe of enlarging our ſettlements; but the abolition of the ſlave-trade, they were never prepared for, after we had ſo ſolemnly eſtabliſhed, ratified, and even ſanctioned, it. — Can any thing more ſtrongly prove, that we are proceeding upon an innovation, when we hear, as a part of the new doctrines, that *no increaſe whatever of cultivation is henceforth to be provided for*; a poſition, uttered at the very moment when the colonies were reproached with not ſupplying our markets ſufficiently with ſugar. —— Why did former laws, in an unlimited manner, encourage the puſhing forwards of ſettlements? Why did the crown throw new lands into circulation? Why did they make the ſettlers purchaſe them at a heavy expence in the ceded iſlands? And, Why were penalties affixed to delays attending their cultivation?

In ſhort, there is no end to the crowd of arguments which offer on this ſubject: — yet every thing which can be ſaid, on this ſide of the water, falls ſhort of the ſtatements which will ſoon reach us from the other

other ſide, where the amount of the intended grievance alone can be fully known, becauſe there alone it can be fully felt. Few, indeed, are the eſtates where negroes are not wanted; and many are thoſe perſons, who poſſeſs tracts of land upon which cultivation has not yet begun; and ſtill more are thoſe who poſſeſs eſtates whoſe cultivation is ſtill incomplete. — The moſt vigorous powers of calculation and reaſoning, when applied to imperfect data, only lead to ingenious modes of error; and if facts, therefore, ſhall prove the depopulation of the iſlands to be in general conſiderable, we muſt bow to facts rather than to oppoſing authorities, however brilliant and however well-intentioned. — To conclude this argument; if a grievance ſhall be created, by the abolition of the ſlave-trade, it becomes this country to provide the remedy, or elſe an indemnity for what cannot be remedied.

At preſent, all that is neceſſary is to deprecate the announcing of hoſtile opinions and adopting of prejudices upon this ſubject. — For myſelf, I cannot diſapprove the conduct of thoſe who wiſh to terminate the ſlave-trade; and I think that it ought to be done without reference to its impreſſion upon the Britiſh empire or to its expence; becauſe the unhappy Africans, who are the victims of it, were not parties to the engagements reſpecting themſelves, made between us and our colonies. If the African potentates could now be made parties to the plan of abolition, I ſhould farther ſay that

the

the abolition ought to be immediate. — But whenever the abolition ſhall once be decided upon, then commences the queſtion of compenſation; which certainly ought to be made to ſit as light as poſſible upon the mother-country; and it is even fair to add, that ſome of the burthen of ſo neceſſary a work may fairly reſt with the coloniſts, as forming part of the empire at large.

A few meaſures in the way of relief, not very difficult to adopt, on the part of Great Britain, and which are independant of the recourſe to be had to pecuniary compenſation will now be mentioned. 1°. The habitual reliance of the coloniſts on the benefits of the Britiſh markets muſt on no account be wantonly checked. 2°. New burthens muſt not be impoſed, at the preſent moment, to oppreſs the coloniſts. Thus far is negative. But, 3°. as the coloniſts are expected to ſacrifice their faireſt hopes and perhaps their poſſeſſions on the altar of humanity, England herſelf muſt ſacrifice ſomething on the ſame altar, by relaxing in her ſeverity as to the interdiction of the North-American trade. If the Weſt Indies were not ſettled on the expreſs *promiſe* of this intercourſe being continued to them under every *poſſible* circumſtance; yet they certainly proceeded upon the *faith* of it; and it is for a very peculiar reaſon neceſſary to them on the preſent occaſion. It is not merely from the trite conſideration of economy, or even of plentiful and ſeaſonable ſupplies, particularly in caſe of famine or war,

that the negroes may be ſaid to depend upon it; but it is important in the view of leaving as little as poſſible for *ſlaves* to perform, and of transfering their taſk as much as poſſible to *freemen*; for, if the ſlaves are confined to the cultivation of products peculiar to the tropics, their labour is thus beſt employed, and may then be exchanged with advantage for the produce of other climates inhabited by freemen; and thus give to Great Britain an increaſe of colony-products independent of any augmentation of ſlavery. This ſuggeſtion ſhould be liſtened to with the more attention, as our preſent policy on the ſubject of America has by no means ſucceeded to us; for, in conſequence of ſhutting the Americans out of the Weſt Indies, they have only crept into the Eaſt Indies, to the diminution of our own trade to America, and the increaſe of the clandeſtine conveyance of India goods into our own iſlands; and they have alſo reſorted to manufactures and a ſyſtem of retaliation, which would otherwiſe have been left unattempted. As this intercourſe is now ſaid to be under negotiation, and as we may obtain ſome equivalent by conceding it as a favour; it will not farther be preſſed for here as a ſpontaneous act towards the colonies. 4°. Indented ſervants, or, if we pleaſe, freemen, muſt as much as poſſible be introduced into the iſlands; in order to render it poſſible to turn their negro domeſtics and tradeſmen into the field, as an aid to the preſent ſtock of field labourers. Europeans, for various

reaſons,

reaſons, are out of the queſtion; and at preſent it may be a critical matter to attempt the ſearch of indented ſervants or freemen in *Africa*; but, without ſpeaking alſo of the *Hindoos*, is it not perfectly practicable to obtain a number of *Chineſe* fit for the purpoſe? The Chineſe are much given to expatriate; they are an ingenious, laborious, and frugal, people; they underſtand how to relieve the inconveniences and add to the enjoyments of a hot climate; they would ſerve not only as domeſtic ſervants, but as tradeſmen and ſuperintendants; they are to be found in every quarter of the *Eaſt-India iſlands*, wherever an European factory is eſtabliſhed; they are not afraid of croſſing the ſea, which they frequent in the Company's ſervice; and, before many years elapſe, it will be found eaſy, perhaps, to have prevailed upon an amount of one or two hundred thouſand of them, of different ſexes, to migrate to our iſlands. In this very important experiment the concurrence of government is indiſpenſable; and we may add, at the ſame time, that this is owing to the colonies, ſhould the ſlave-trade be aboliſhed; and, as far as it went, it would be an indemnity *in kind*; and even conſtitute a benefit, as the parties brought might be depended upon for contributing to defend the iſlands both againſt their external and internal enemies. 5°. The iſlands may be eſſentially ſerved, alſo, by the introduction of various plants. The bread-fruit will be a noble preſent, and the various ſpice-trees a politic one: the

ſeveral ſpecies of bamboo, alſo, will not be without their uſe; and the introduction of Eaſtern fruits might add to the temptation in favour of reſidence in the iſlands. Perhaps it might not be ſuperfluous to make trial of new ſpecies of the *ſugar-cane*, of which there are ſeveral aſcertained, though one only is known to our iſlands, the whole ſtock of what we poſſeſs (if we are to pay attention to learned botaniſts) being to be conſidered as various parts of one identical plant, in conſequence of having been propagated from ſtems and roots, inſtead of ſeeds. 6°. Among other new importations, uſeful animals ſhould not be forgotten; whether for labour, as the Eaſtern bullock, or for food, or other ſerviceable purpoſes. — Theſe ſeveral means of relief could not be very coſtly, but might prove highly efficacious; and contribute to the benefit of others beſides the actual ſufferers, as well as to the ornament and reputation of our age and nation. — Indemnities of a *more direct* kind muſt be left to the juſtice and generoſity of the Britiſh nation, when a proper period ſhall arrive for conſidering this important ſubject.

We ſhall now conclude with two or three miſcellaneous obſervations reſpection the ſlave-queſtion.

I. The *right* of Great Britain to controul and even aboliſh the ſlave-trade, provided ſhe makes due compenſation

penſation to the coloniſts, has never hitherto been conteſted — A great law perſonage, in the Houſe of Lords, has lately thought proper to ſtart a doubt upon this ſubject, which may have conſiderable influence in exciting a regular oppoſition upon this ground in the iſlands. The coloniſts, however, will ſuffer ſo much by the abolition of the ſlave-trade, that it is hoped that no new calamity will be coupled with it, ariſing from a political diſpute, founded ſolely in miſtake, and for which it is impoſſible to chooſe a time more dangerous than the preſent; whether we conſider their domeſtic ſituation, or the novel poſition of their commerce.

The claim of this country to regulate the commerce of the colonies, is co-eval with their ſettlement, and was acknowledged even by thoſe among them which denied our right to taxation. It is clear, indeed, that this power muſt reſide ſomewhere; and, as no conſtitutional proviſion whatever is made for a joint exerciſe of it, it naturally follows, that, from the earlieſt ſettlers, down to the lateſt, every man is bound by the claims which have been inſtituted by the mother-country, from the earlieſt moment, and which have, in effect, been made the baſis and condition of our connection.

As the law of England, as well as natural law, when giving a right, give alſo every thing that is neceſſary to the full exerciſe of that right, ſo in the preſent

preſt... inſtance we find, that, at the earlieſt periods, cuſtom-houſe officers have been appointed, and cuſtom-houſe dues been received in the colonies, by virtue of Engliſh laws. The declaratory act, in 1766, which aſſumed the right of binding the colonies in all caſes whatſoever, will not be brought in argument on this occaſion; becauſe every thing, which pretends to too much authority, is apt, at laſt, to become no authority for any thing;—but we may fairly cite the act, in 1778, which *renounced taxation* over the colonies, becauſe the proviſions of this colony-*Magna-Charta* were never objected to in any repreſentations made by the coloniſts, either at home or abroad. By this act, a *reſerve* of power is expreſſly made for impoſing ſuch duties, as may be expedient for the *regulation of commerce*; the *nett* * produce of ſuch duties to be always paid and applied to the uſe of the colony in which the ſame ſhall be reſpectively levied, in ſuch manner as other duties, collected by the authority of its General Aſſembly, are ordinarily paid and applied. Purſuant to this principle, the free-port acts have conſtantly levied upon the colonies all the ſums neceſſary for carrying the ſame into effect; and to this example, which is freſh in memory, a multitude of others may be added, were not the principle too univerſally acknowledged to want any confirmation.

* That is, after paying the charges attending the carrying ſuch regulations into execution.

Unhappily

Unhappily the purchaſe and the importation of ſlaves to the colonies are too certainly to be contemplated as a *trade*; and though the propriety of this term has been diſputed by thoſe who wiſh for the abolition, yet the acts of parliament confirming it, and the coloniſts, at all times, when ſpeaking of it, declare it to be a *trade*; and therefore confeſs it to be ſubject to regulation by the Britiſh parliament. — But the ſubmiſſion of the colonies to this authority in queſtion ſtands on a much more ſolid ground than mere implication. In the courſe of the laſt four years, the colonies, either by themſelves, their agents, or ſome of the moſt reſpectable individuals among them, have conſented or requeſted to be examined on the part of one or other of the *three* branches of our legiſlature, in conſequence of the motions for the abolition of the ſlave-trade having been repeatedly announced and debated in parliament. This *acquieſcence*, in the power of our legiſlature, on this ſubject, has been too marked and repeated not to compromiſe and bind the colonies, and to prevent all controverſy whatever as to right.

Parliament has a clear right, therefore, to interfere on the preſent occaſion; but, if it interferes without providing an indemnity, it uſes its right in order to inflict a wrong, (its former ſanction of the trade conſidered.)

But the Britiſh parliament will, perhaps, do more than exerciſe a *general* right on this occaſion. It may, among

among other meaſures, attempt to aboliſh the ſlave-trade gradually, by impoſing a tax upon negroes imported into the colonies, which tax ſhall gradually increaſe. This regulation, if it takes place, will evidently be one of a *commercial* nature, and certainly be much preferable to a forcible limitation of the number of negroes to be annually imported; inaſmuch as it avoids all complication and partiality in the diſtribution of the negroes ſo imported, and furniſhes a fund of indemnity in each of the iſlands, which, by the nature things, will bear a relative proportion to their reſpective loſſes. It will, indeed, by no means fully atone for thoſe loſſes, and therefore the mother-country muſt add other funds; but, unleſs the minds of the coloniſts ſhall be previouſly poiſoned, the law, in *this* particular, will ſtand a chance of being popular in the iſlands, and intereſt a number of perſons in giving aid to its execution.

II. But while I ſupport the authority of the mother-country in the above caſes, it is impoſſible not to diſcountenance a pretenſion, which there is, however, reaſon to think is now abandoned by thoſe who have hitherto maintained it; I mean, that of our having a right to controul *ſlavery in the iſlands*. — An imperial power is given to Great Britain in matters of commerce, becauſe it is an united concern; but internal government is a concern which is confined within the limits

of

of the colonies. The degree of ſovereignty, which the coloniſts enjoy within their own territories, is a matter as well of conſent on our ſide as of right on theirs; for, whatever power this country might have thought itſelf intitled to on this ſubject, in the firſt inſtance, it has long ſince been abandoned, and ſettlements have been formed on the faith of a certain degree of independence. — After ſo clear a diſcrimination of authorities, therefore, whatever be the temptation to intermeddle, it would be highly imprudent to yield to it; and certainly not the wiſeſt way of obtaining the ends of humanity, which are the objects of it. We may, therefore, ſafely aſſert, firſt, that we have no title to interpoſe as to any ſuppreſſion or modification of ſlavery; ſecondly, that, if we attempt it, we ſhall excite a ferment among the ſlaves, already too much diſpoſed to it; thirdly, that we ſhall chill the efforts of many moderate men in the colonies, who are diſpoſed to plead in favour of this unhappy order of men, (leſt advantage ſhould be taken of their ſtatements;) and, laſtly, ſuch attempts will be perfectly premature, miſchevious, or uſeleſs, as the negroes are by no means ripe for emancipation, and as all proviſions in their favour will depend for their execution on the concurrence and good-will of the coloniſts; not to mention that the very fear of a ſpeedy abolition will, of itſelf, be the moſt powerful means of procuring a melioration of the lot of the ſlaves. If it be aſked, when the pe-

riod of emancipation will arrive? I anſwer, as was anſwered in the Houſe of Commons, "that it cannot "happen *for a generation to come*, becauſe the preſent "generation of ſlaves is avowedly unfit for it."

III. The laſt of the obſervations alluded to above, which I ſhall preſume to offer, is, like the two which have preceded it, ſolely ſuggeſted with a view to tranquillity and mutual good-humour between the contending parties; and reſpects the degree of oppoſition proper to be given to the progreſs of the ſlave-bill, now pending in parliament. As this ſubject is of the utmoſt importance, I ſhall beg leave to attempt to diſſuade the coloniſts from too obſtinate a reſiſtance to their fate, by the following arguments. — Firſt, they can never reverſe the vote of the Houſe of Commons, the progreſs of whoſe ſentiments on this ſubject has been rapid beyond belief. The general queſtion about abolition, laſt year, was *loſt* by two to one, while the queſtion for a gradual abolition has now been *carried* by three to one; and, merely upon a queſtion of prolonging the ſlave-trade for a ſingle year beyond the term of three years, the colonies loſt 30 friends, which made a difference of 60 votes. If ſuch are the changes of temper in the Houſe, and if the remains of attachment to the colonial ſyſtem, upon this occaſion, are proved to be thus ſlight; what have the colonies to hope for by a farther reſiſtance? —— In the next place, ſuppoſing they could alter the vote,

vote, it would only *accumulate reſentment* and irritate their adverſaries to do their worſt. It is impoſſible that parliamentary ſpeaking can go for nothing. The epiſodes of Mr. Wilberforce, the ſubtle arithmetic and the glowing proſpects and perorations of Mr. Pitt, the vigorous ſallies and ſarcaſms or the pithy ſtatements of Mr. Fox, will again add to the number and determination of their enemies; and as the public originally influenced the Houſe of Commons, ſo the Houſe of Commons by its late votes and debates will re-act and and increaſe the intereſt of the public. In ſhort, the coloniſts may now capitulate *on terms*; whereas next year the enemy is likely to be ſufficiently in force to make them ſurrender at *diſcretion*. — But who is there that does not perceive that *popularity* is become needful to the coloniſts? The ſlave-trade is not their *only* queſtion: various others hang in a ſtate of dangerous ſuſpence. Individuals are ſeeking to precipitate miniſters into novelties and a ſyſtem of harſhneſs; and miniſters ſeem to offer but a faint reſiſtance to them. Individuals have even a formidable power, depending ſolely on themſelves; namely, that of influencing the conſumption of colony-products both at home and abroad; aſſociations with perſons in foreign countries, which are objects of hoſtile proclamations in other inſtances, being allowed in this inſtance to have their full force againſt the coloniſts and their moſt important intereſts. — Another circumſtance, no leſs alarming, is

the poſſible *defection*, or *relaxation*, of their warmeſt friends, of which many inſtances have already been given in the Houſe of Commons;* and the example ſeems to have extended to ſome of the coloniſts; all of whom, it muſt be obſerved, do not want negroes, though all of them deſire to preſerve their characters and ſecure peace; and ſome of them (notwithſtanding the opinion of Mr. Pitt) have been found not incapable of modifying their ſyſtem, even in ſpite of their intereſt.—Beſides, it is by no means wiſe to *forfeit the pledge* of the great promoters of the abolition, given in favour of a continuance of the trade for four years longer, previous to its abolition; the power and influence of theſe gentlemen being ſuch, as not to make it prudent to value them lightly.—Have not the coloniſts, moreover, prayed for a deciſion; and, when it is given, will it not ſeem unreaſonable not to ſubmit to it, as well as unwiſe not to compound with it, leſt a worſe thing ſhould happen?—Why too ſhould they be too earneſt upon this occaſion, when they know, that, if hard preſſed, they have a remedy in contraband; which, though it may be checked by force, and, if

* Even Mr. Dundas's engagement to take the ſenſe of the Houſe of Commons again, upon the ſlave queſtion, was only upon condition that the *regulations* to be enacted ſhould be ſuch as he could not approve; but Mr. Pitt gave the Houſe reaſon to underſtand that they would be ſuch as Mr. Dundas ſhould not only approve of, but himſelf take a lead in propoſing.

moderation

moderation were uſed as to the abolition, would die ſpontaneouſly; yet cannot be radically cured, if encouraged by ſtrong temptations, without the zealous concurrence of various foreign powers.—But there is a reaſon of another kind to be offered reſpecting *humanity*. The trade has received its ſentence of death in the opinion of the concerned; they have ſeen the hand-writing on the wall; and, having had warning to quit, like other tenants they wiſh to rack the premiſes. Africa will become the ſubject of a ſcramble: the black traders of that country will cry havock and let looſe the dogs of war. If the *fears* of the concerned are thoroughly awakened without any thing paſſing in parliament, it is impoſſible to check this miſchief, otherwiſe than by regulations; and, though the ceſſation of the demand of ſlaves for St. Domingo, for ſome time to come, will admit of an unuſual quantity for the moment being ſent to our iſlands without any additional diſtreſs to Africa; yet the conſideration here urged will have ſufficient weight even with the Lords, to lead them to paſs an early bill of regulation and reſtraint, if not of abolition. — As to the Lords, their reſiſtance to the public impulſe may be ventured upon to a certain length; and the exertions of a certain greal naval perſonage, who is in a ſituation to feel the maritime reſources, afforded by the Weſt Indies, as a perſonal concern to himſelf, may greatly encourage them; but the times are too delicate for the Lords to ſtand alone,

and

and riſk a junction of the aſſociations for aboliſhing the ſlave-trade with the aſſociations formed for political purpoſes.—There is another argument, of an intereſted nature, which is by no means without its weight; for, if the coloniſts yield with a good grace to what is propoſed, and bend the great ſtrength of their evidence to a ſtatement of their neceſſities and to the vindication of their characters, which, generally ſpeaking, have been cruelly aſperſed; their application for indemnity and relief will naturally fare the better. A vote in their favour will thus more readily be obtained from parliament, and the aſſent of the people will be more chearful in bearing the burthen impoſed by that vote.

But, to proceed to the laſt and ſtrongeſt conſideration under this head. The coloniſts will be utterly miſtaken, if they think the oppoſition they have to contend with is *tranſient*. The queſtion will ſoon be delivered over in charge to the hands of thoſe who are now young; and, there can be no doubt, that ſchools and univerſities, that clergy and ſectaries, and that authors and periodical writers of every deſcription, are every where againſt them; as well as the ſofter ſex, who, in the ſituation of mothers, &c. will have a deciſive influence over the riſing generation. Nor ſhould it be forgotten, in a conteſt of this ſort, that time is daily carrying away perſons of the old political ſchool, who were bred in the prejudices of their forefathers; and that ſentiments are no longer hereditary

tary in the preſent age, when men begin to think for themſelves, and feel a property in their opinions. — Beſides, their is a popular principle to work upon, which never can abate in its force. The trade in queſtion is a trade againſt the perſons, the property, and the peace, of men, who have never harmed us. The trade has been arraigned and condemned, after every indulgence has been given it for a hearing; but, alas! no juſtification, or even extenuation, could be offered at that hearing: only arguments of policy, which are now but faintly attended to, and certain objections as to practicability; and even a Weſt-India meeting, at the London-Tavern, has generouſly avowed, that they have no wiſh to oppoſe the civilization of Africa, and only deſire to ſhare in the trade for ſlaves, while it is left open to others. — But the cauſe is not only popular, but it is one, of all others, liable to be *kept in agitation*. Men love to be righteous at the expence of other people, and acting upon each other is held equivalent to acting for themſelves. In ſhort, vicarious merit, and virtue by ſubſtitution, form a ſort of *commutation*-ſyſtem, by which men eaſily content themſelves reſpecting their own conduct. Virtue muſt, in general, conſiſt in *effort*, ſince it would not be worth while making a point with mankind of what is commonly ſpontaneous; while *criticiſm*, on the other hand, is *eaſy and pleaſant*, being, perhaps, an irritative paſſion implanted in us, in order to operate as a corrective

nective towards others for the improvement of the race at large. It is becauſe religious perſecution has been founded upon theſe active and permanent principles, that it has been furious as well as univerſal, ſo as unhappily, not, even to this moment, to be extinguiſhed in our own nation.

The coloniſts, therefore, would do wiſely to make up their minds to their fate at once; particularly ſince, if this bill paſſes, the legal trade in ſlaves is gone *for ever*, as the Houſe of Commons will always oppoſe a negative upon its reſtoration. Something, however, has been ſaved from ſhipwreck in the conteſt: calumnies on the coloniſts have been ſomewhat diſcredited; the poſſibility of obtaining white men to labour in tropical countries is given up; the ſlavery actually ſubſiſting in the iſlands ſeems allowed to remain untouched; and the negroes are agreed to be unfit for preſent emancipation. In ſhort, the abolition of ſlavery itſelf in the iſlands is left to its own fate; and, as the children of the Weſt Indians, wherever ſent out of the iſlands for education, will be made aſhamed, if not averſe, with reſpect to the poſſeſſion of ſlaves; one of two things will happen; either ſlavery will become ſo mild, as only to be ſuch in name; or it will be formally aboliſhed, as heretofore in Europe, by the deciſion of thoſe who are intereſted in it; and thus ſuffer what Mr. Hume would call an *Euthanaſia*.

To

To conclude, every day has preſented various aſpects reſpecting the fate of the ſlave-trade. No man could tell, on the ſide of the coloniſts, what ought to be his own conduct, till he ſaw the conduct of others. But the thing at laſt has taken a fixed ſhape, and the coloniſts have no courſe left but that of moderation. Their late petition to the Lords, though it has contributed its *ſhare* to poſtpone the great deciſion for a ſeſſion, will eaſily be forgiven, as an act of juſtice to abſent friends, and as forming a baſis for their own indemnity; though it is to be obſerved, that it is not a meaſure in which all the coloniſts have been engaged. — Let the coloniſts be wiſe only in what remains. *What can't be cured muſt be endured!*

If the coloniſts anſwer to this advice; "We have "friends at *court*, and ſhall ſurrender nothing which "we can keep;" I reply, that, if perſons have friends, it is ſtill a queſtion of moment, when and how to uſe them; and the queſtion is for *their* conſideration rather than that of others. In the deciſion of it, the arguments I have uſed merit ſome attention. — I ſhall only add, that, if the ſupport of theſe friends can be directed to other points which have been agitated above, it will be a proof of their friendſhip greatly wanted.—But, *in any event*, the coloniſts muſt allow that no aſſurances and no proſpects can juſtify their not providing reſources in caſe of a defeat. The purchaſe of negroes, particularly females, will be purſued with avidity, and does

not require alluding to; except to check the ardour of the coloniſts, who will be apt, in ſome caſes, to purchaſe more negroes at a time, than can eaſily be taken care of in a domeſtic view, or than will be ſafe in a public one. What I would rather notice regards the meaſures requiſite to increaſe births, leſſen deaths, procure ſubſtitutes for negro labour, introduce morality and Chriſtianity among the negroes, and bind their attachment; and, at the ſame time, to ſuppreſs the cruelties of individuals towards them.—On theſe ſubjects, a multitude of hints might here be offered, but they will be reſerved for a future occaſion.

THE END.